The Antioch Review

SUMMER, 1957

The Decline of the Serious Writer
—James T. Farrell

The Pastor of Biebernheim
A Story of Germany Between the Wars
—Francis Russell

Edmund Burke and the American Liberal Tradition
—Arnold A. Rogow

— Two Articles on Politics —

Afterthoughts on Madison Avenue Politics
—Stanley Kelley

Time to Rescue our Politicians
—William G. Carleton

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Editor's Shop Talk

In his article beginning on the next page James Farrell remarks upon the impersonality of paperback book publishing. The growth of the reprint trade, he says, has helped to break down the former close relationship between author and publisher; books are now promoted and sold as commodities, and the serious writer finds himself in competition with mass production.

Others have noted that the paperback trade has helped to cheapen the public attitude toward books as well as lowered the financial cost. Something happens to the opinion of "culture" when books are sold alongside gum and picture magazines. It has even been suggested that the discrepancy between the bosomy females pictured on the covers of paperbacks and the contents to be found inside calls for the attention of the Federal Trade Commission.

Another side of paperback publishing lies in the appearance of reprints of serious value. More and more publishers of hard cover books have seen an opportunity to reproduce serious works, both recent and of an earlier generation, in cheaper format and in much larger editions. Books which once moved the intellectual world often disappear except in libraries and in second-hand book stores. Many of these works are now reappearing on newsstands and bookstore shelves.

It would be an interesting exercise to review these books under some such rubric as "Where Are They Now?" or "What Do They Mean Today?" Here are a few reprints taken at random from *Paperbound Books in Print:*

Kenneth Burke's *Counterstatement*; Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Modern Temper*; Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*; Julien Benda's *Betrayal of the Intellectuals*; Ring Lardner's *The Love Nest and Other Stories*; Lewis Mumford's *The Brown Decades*; Newton Arvin's *Herman Melville.*

Some of these books have already been re-reviewed in relation to other matters. But the focus asked for here is on the reputation of the books today—how well the author's conclusions stand up, what meaning he has for the modern world. The reviews would have to be extended beyond conventional length; 3,000-6,000 words seems reasonable. Treatment would vary, of course: a review of *The Love Nest* would clearly take in all of Lardner; consideration of Arvin's *Melville* would inevitably emphasize the revival of Melville's reputation a generation ago; *The Brown Decades* would call for an estimate of Mumford as well as of American cultural history. But the call is for social and historical perspective. We would like to hear from prospective reviewers with specific works in mind. P. B.

The Decline of the Serious Writer

By JAMES T. FARRELL

IN THESE DAYS, a writer who possesses some spirit of seriousness in his own professional attitude toward his work often chokes up with angry cynicism. While he exists in a period when we have never had it so good, the opposite is beginning to happen to him. Obviously I am not writing without reference to personal experiences and circumstances, but I shall refer also to many others—to a number of serious writers and thinkers. For gradually, many of those who have given the best years of their lives in serious literary and intellectual effort are discovering that they have something to put on the market which does not pay. In many instances, their work has small market value or none at all. Briefly, the sales value of creativity, intelligence, sensibility, and discrimination is not only low, but continues to decline steadily. With increasing frequency, serious writers must live on the by-products of the activity which has permitted them to attain some distinction or celebrity.

About a year ago, I was speaking with the wife of a man who has attained national distinction as a critic and whose name is known and respected abroad in many countries. She was telling me how her husband works. He teaches and has attained a reputation as a professor on the faculty of an outstanding university. His character is such that teaching drains off a considerable portion of his energy. He gives considerable time to his students. Then he goes home and spends long hours at the work necessary for the preparation of his lectures and his books. This he must do in order to support himself and his family according to standards which are not at all extravagant. This

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Novelist JAMES T. FARRELL's right to speak of honesty and sincerity in literature is of many years standing. Last year he spent a number of months abroad as chairman of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (recently become inactive) visiting Israel, India, Pakistan, and other Asian countries. At present he is at work on two books dealing with professional baseball.

is a continuing, a seemingly never-ending, and a gruelling, punishing process for many. In order to have some of that good in a time when we have never had it so good, they must go on through long days of intensive, excessive, and even exhaustively concentrated work, sometimes to the neglect of family, friends, and a normal amount of that relaxation and entertainment which has now almost become the *summum bonum* of our American life. On a fourteen-to-sixteen-hour day, seven days a week, they may make a living; again, they may not.

I ran into an old friend of mine at the National Press Club in Washington a few years ago. In his youth, he had shown promise of being one of our outstanding journalists. He still remains a good newspaperman but when I last saw him, he was already sinking into cynicism. Regarding me as a curiosity, he asked: "Do you still write books?"

When I said that I did, he then asked me ironically: "Why?"

Another nationally known journalist, an author of best sellers, told me: "I can't afford to write books. I'm not going to write any more."

A journalist who knows Europe and the Middle East quite thoroughly, told me: "I can't afford to write articles."

He meant articles for the quality rather than mass-circulation magazines. The serious journal sometimes cannot afford to pay you enough for the work you do. This is not a question of pecuniary-mindedness, but of simple economics. The cost of contributing a serious article is sometimes greater than the payment for that article.

On more than one occasion I have had to decide not to write articles for the same reason. I have had to turn down more than one assignment on matters on which I believe I have something to say because I frankly could not afford to take the assignment. For instance, a national quality magazine asked me to do an article about my home town of Chicago. I have tried to keep somewhat abreast of changes in Chicago since my youth and boyhood there, but in order to do this article, I would have had to spend at least several weeks in Chicago. The payment offered plus the expenses this magazine could allot would have meant that had I done the article, I should have lost money at a period when I could not afford to. I should actually have been paying to write this article. From time to time, I have lost money on such ventures.

Concerning the writing of a book, this is frequently the case, especially if you take into account the fact that a writer must pay for his keep while he is working. For over half a year, I could not afford to work on a novel. Only recently have I been able to work on one. In some cases, it may take a writer many years before he gains back what he puts into a book. The venture is difficult when you aren't rich.

These facts have a serious effect on the cultural life of the country. There is much thought, much criticism and discussion, which goes unexpressed because many people who have something—or even a great deal—to say cannot afford to say it, except, perhaps, off the cuff with their friends. They cannot afford to sacrifice themselves into bankruptcy and ill health.

There is always over-competition in practically every field of writing. Publishing houses and magazines cannot be conducted on unbusiness-like or uneconomic principles unless they are financed by millionaires who can lose money on a hobby or a public service. But the cost of sacrifice and seriousness has risen with the cost of living.

A change has come into what we will call the market in ideas and literature, and it now appears that this change is qualitative. There is now not only a mass market in ideas, opinions, and literature: there is a world market. For a mass market, many stereotyped, machine-made articles and stories are wanted. Several reasons for this are apparent. Nothing succeeds like success. The mass circulation magazines, the movies, radio, and television, have all been highly profitable. An examination of the financial situation of these business enterprises will undoubtedly reveal that a relatively high proportion of outlay goes into executive salaries, overhead, and, in some instances, publicity expenses. This is so, for instance, in the movies. A group of executives, editors, advertising men, and others are making a very good living out of these enterprises. They, especially, are among the people in America who have never had it so good. They have come to learn what pays and they keep shovelling out what brings them their weekly salary checks. In a number of instances, they are mere cogs in the wheels of a communication-cultural empire. Their power of decision is limited and they have only a small area within which they may take the risk of using anything original. These men are hemmed in by the needs of the mass market. And one of the incidental

needs of the mass market is to keep them and their superiors in good circumstances.

The capital investment in communication and popular culture runs into the hundreds of millions or more. I should guess that in the United States at least a billion dollars is invested in the cliché market of stereotypes, banality, and stupidity. In addition, there are the merchants of the moronic sex magazines. If all this declines too much, we could even have a depression. Truth, sensibility, creativity could possibly produce an economic tail spin of rather wide proportions: too much intelligence could even cause a depression in the United States.

A second reason for this situation is that a large mass of people want stereotypes. We can no longer dispute this fact. People keep buying them. There is partial truth in the claims of motion picture executives and publicity people that the public is getting what it wants. Nobody puts a gun to the head of hundreds, of thousands, even of millions, forcing them to shell out money for manufactured stereotypes. Nobody makes millions want to have their hearts warmed with patent insincerity. The merchants and dispensers of stereotypes and banalities know that there is a large waiting audience for their wares. And this audience is not, despite the claims of European intellectuals, purely American. Large masses of the English, the French, the Italians, the Australians, and others want it. Because America is big and rich, this phenomenon only seems to be peculiarly American. Millions are waiting, not for the sunrise, but for next week's and next month's literary and intellectual junk.

The success of the mass-circulation cultural industries, and the rising cost of production explains the decline of our quality and literary magazines. We have fewer serious magazines than we used to have, and even those which remain do not pulse with the excitement which they once possessed. At best, they maintain a good level of competence, honesty, and thoroughness. But for boldness, stimulation, the infection of originality, we cannot expect too much from them. To encounter challenging ideas and interpretations, you do not usually go to these publications. This change, however, is not one merely of the last few years. It has been happening for a long time. I recall back in 1932 when I was young and new in New York and the so-called literary world. A friend arranged for me to see the late George

Hartmann, editor of *Harper's Magazine*. He is remembered as having been a very fine editor. We discussed not only the prospect or possibility of my writing for him, but editing and quality magazines more generally. Shaking his head, he said: "You know, editing a magazine like this one is like running a vaudeville show."

The quality magazine has undoubtedly reached its natural limit of circulation and influence. It cannot expect to expand to any significant degree. It exerts an influence in this country, but I strongly doubt that its influence is as great and as effective now as was the case twenty, thirty, and forty years ago. And one reason for this decline lies in the fact that seriousness, ideas, literature cannot be easily merchandised. People want much of their thinking packaged for them. Merchandising has become dominant in the market of words, images, and sounds. This, also, is not new. The changes in scale and volume have, however, resulted in qualitative changes. The intensity of competition has resulted in the use of high pressure publicity methods. And with this, I find growing insincerity.

With growing insincerity, there comes a widening hollowness and emptiness in living. Methods of promotion, often based on the application of the Pavlovian principle of the conditioned reflex and the commercial appeal of sex, are immunizing against the infections of art and stupefying the challenges of thought, at least in the nontechnological, nonengineering, and nonscientific fields. The mass audience does not have the time to think, and it has little time to feel. Its leisure is necessary so that the promoters can promote, the entertainers can entertain, and the market in false optimism, clichés, sentimentalities, and artificial heartwarming can be sustained at boom proportions. Almost a new class, a new and semi-coherent bureaucracy of heartwarmers, must live off this process.

These factors are exerting an increasing influence and pressure upon the book business. Publishers still exist who believe in taking a risk on work that is serious, honest, and original. But their tribe is not increasing. And I find an increasing number of people in the book trade who are subject to confusion. Some of them are stretched out on picket fences, with one leg on the best seller fence and the other on that of taste and seriousness. The need to conceive of marketable works, the necessity of finding books which are popular in the commercial sense, is greater than it ever was. Publishers need big sellers

more than they do "big" authors. The account books are gradually rendering them less sensitive to the author who writes, and must write, out of inner need. Some of them are not quite aware of the degree to which their own better sensibility to literature is going to sleep. If they were, their own confusions and contradictions would become painful.

Anyone who is familiar with the book business knows that you can frequently make reputations by merchandising and by methods of publicity. Books do not always receive space and attention in the few remaining organs where books are seriously considered solely on the grounds of merit. Critics and editors are not venal. They are merely living in the same general world where merchandising has become virtually an end rather than a means. The values of some of them are becoming subtly perverted. In most instances, the newspaper treatment of books is one of the least important features of the news. A writer who has a better press agent than ability is more newsworthy than many first-rate writers, and certainly more than promising younger writers. A novelist who can sell a commonplace work to Hollywood is more newsworthy than many poets of stature. In nearly all instances the bedroom habits of a lady writer can be of greater news value than her other talents. In some newspapers, any good-looking girl from society, or for that matter any bosomy B or C or X girl with a call house past, is worth more space and a photograph than a real poetess, if she can write a book of so-called poetry or even hire someone to write it for her. Such girls can even become better known as poetesses than Leonie Adams, Marya Zaturenska, H. D., or many other women poets. This I state not in moral indignation, but descriptively. It is the way things are.

The book business has been revolutionized by the inexpensive paperback book. The problem of mass distribution has been sufficiently solved to make paperbacks economically feasible. And just as the trade publishers have, despite my above remarks, maintained a relatively good all-around level of taste so have the best paperback publishers. The paperback book affords much good reading at a price most of us can afford. But it has not and is not likely to bring upon us a Renaissance of the human spirit. In the paperback field the individual author does not count too much. When he happens to have a best seller, or when more than one publisher wants him, he might count well for

the moment. Besides the fact that there is gold in him, the zest of competition might even help him to get a bigger advance than he would otherwise receive. But over the long run, he is replaceable. In order to stay in business and to meet the tests of intensive competition, the paperback publishers must issue so many books a month and these new books have to be placed on the racks. Other writers are crowded off the racks. The writer who is crowded off may be in vital need of sales, but the sales he needs are of his own books. The publisher needs sales, also, but the cash from the sale of one book has as much value in the bank as that of another. The bank account is superior to taste and ability.

Fashions change, and when a writer is not in fashion, it is uneconomical to give his books space. Even when he is in fashion, the necessary rush of new books often pushes him out of distribution. A big paperback publisher does not need a leading author as a trade house does. He needs a selling author. In paperbacks, many authors, even worse than Mickey Spillane, are selling authors. And the trade houses now need selling authors more than exceptional talents. A book club author is more valuable today than a new American Marcel Proust would be or James Joyce, if such were to appear. The paperback publisher can neglect talent and wait for a big break to come to an author, and then redistribute him. Names, with very few exceptions, are not too important. Pictures, titles, bosoms, and many other factors sell the paperback books. Most authors who have sufficient or almost minimum competence can be interchanged one for the other.

Something else is happening. A paperback sale or the possibility of one offers the regular trade publisher a better chance of breaking even or even of making money. Thirty years ago, a trade publisher could either break even or merely suffer an insignificant loss on a new book if it sold fifteen hundred or two thousand copies. Today he must sell four or five thousand copies to save himself from serious loss. Paperback possibilities afford him very good padding. And in turn, a motion picture or television rendering of a book promises direct or indirect profits for both the trade publisher and the paperback publisher. Neither trade nor paperback publishers take these facts into consideration in all cases, but they usually will not turn their backs on a big chance and the big money. Inevitably, these economic factors must have and are having increasing influence on publishers and

editors. By and large, the writer and publisher have a common interest. But publishers and writers get along best when the author's books are selling. Then it is like a honeymoon. There are exceptions to this rule and notable ones. But these are really few in relative number. The exceptions do not prove a rule.

Publishers are often placed in a situation where they have a divided mind. They must publish books which they do not respect but which are a good meal ticket. They must spend more money in advertising such books than on others which they publish but which will not help pay much of the overhead. They are often pleased to publish the latter type of books, and most certainly they enjoy the prestige which these books give them and their firms. From time to time, some of them experience quivers of guilt which play in and out of their consciousness. Furthermore, it is often difficult for them to keep clear the questions of taste and of sales. The editing, production, promotion, and sale of a book is a fairly big effort, and much sincere thought and energy often go into it. And publishers become emotionally involved in the fate of some of their books. But this also puts them too close to the books. The reviews sometimes then hit them like a ton of bricks, especially if the reviews are unfavorable. Such reviews can affect and confuse the judgment of publishers. A reviewer's verdict can even influence them more than their own taste. I have seen this happen not only in America but abroad. I think I am in a special position to assert this because for years I had a publisher who was quite different, and who, whether he was right or wrong, had faith in my work and was undismayed by any adverse reviews or by the inevitable fluctuations in sales figures. But this does not always happen. Many writers can testify that it doesn't, just as many publishers and editors can give strong and sometimes amusing evidence concerning the vanity and the over-demandingness of writers.

But there are contradictions which enter into the relationships of authors and publishers, and within the minds of publishers themselves. The publishers are in business and they have to pay the bills. They must meet given conditions. They cannot look at books purely or solely as art or as honest expressions of ideas or as honest and serious searches for the truth. They must also regard their books as commodities. They can only lose so much money on an author. They can only wait so long to get a return on their investment in him. Most,

or at least many, writers have bad periods, either creatively or because of the superficial shifts of fashion. Frequently, an author in these periods is simply not an economically feasible investment. It is then either a fact or it seems to be a fact that good money will be thrown on top of the bad money already sunk in him. This situation is not due to malice on the part of publishers. It grows out of the conditions of the market. The simple and plain fact, demonstrated many times over in the history of literature and book publishing as well as in that of the other arts, is that neither talent nor truth are, necessarily, marketable commodities. Talent is frequently uneconomical. Truth is often fair-to-middling business or just plain, simple, and unfancy bad business.

But it remains that the writer, too, is in business in a sense. He has to pay his bills. His problems are mostly his own. The publisher, unless he is a shallow man, faces his contradictions about books of truth and books which are literary cans of soup. If the day would come when books of truth and merit could all sell half as well as literary cans of soup, these problems would not exist. In fact, if we take into consideration the weight of my analysis, we can even say that books of merit have quite frequently done much, much better than could have been expected.

All of the problems and contradictions which I have mentioned have become more sharp because of the increased costs of production and of living. In addition, books face the increasing competition of many other means of entertainment. Book reading suffers because of the wide opportunities which people have for the use of their leisure. Television, which is far from having reached its full development, cannot but have many effects on reading and the book business. In fact, the book business, because of economics and technology, is threatened with the fate of becoming subsidiary to other media, and like a mere minor league in the world of culture, entertainment, and leisure.

These developments are observable as events of change. They go on day by day. At the same time, the cultural climate is also changing. The nerves of curiosity are being weakened. The value and meaning of words is being both altered and reduced in power, significance, and meaning. Advertising is having a pervasive and corrupting influence on language. Television commentators tell us about razor

blades, face powder, cosmetics, spaghetti, automobile tires, refrigerators, soap, and toothpaste almost as though they were describing Marilyn Monroe. The contest of name brands is most intense and we have songs about the flip-top box in which you get filter cigarettes as though the flip-top box were *Molly-O* and the *Rose of Tralee*. Through gossip columns and in many other ways, language is being changed and affected because words are a commodity. We used to say that the style is the man. We can now sometimes say that the style is a man's business and his income tax headaches. The language and jargon of public relations and promotion is entering popular currency and has begun to affect not only speech, but attitudes and the sense of values.

A more important change is taking place. It involves prestige and effort. You can more easily become secure by having a photographic memory and answering a question than by studying in search of the truth or in the effort to find yourself inwardly and develop or clarify your own feelings. You might get as much as $1,000 by being able to state before a television audience that the first name of a former Chicago White Sox shortstop whose last name began with *A*, is Luke. This helps keep one name brand up with rival name brands. So a rival name brand has another program. Then there is the phenomenon of the $64,000 question. You can have a kind of celebrity as an entertainer and get $5,000 for appearing on a television show to answer trivial questions half-articulately. But often you can't earn a nickel for telling people something truthful, important, interesting and, perhaps, even relevant to serious issues involving our troubled and tormented emotions or our fate.

Consequences of these developments are many. One is that attention is focused on leisure and consumption which are now so dominant a factor in our prosperous society. This includes the consumption of time during which emotions and energy seep away like drops of water falling one by one out of a faucet. America is a free country and people have the right to use their leisure as they so deem. I do not challenge this. I merely comment here to stress the fact that receptivity to ideas as well as to serious art and literature is being affected in a social, cultural, and economic climate such as ours. And increasingly, the effort to present ideas and to create serious literature is becoming influenced in the social and economic organization of

our culture and our leisure life. This is largely a result of the fact that the writer is becoming increasingly dependent upon the mass market in culture or on counterfeit substitutes of culture. He is thrown into competition on terms where he is very likely to lose or else to change and with this change to abandon his talents or else to misuse them.

Many intelligent and serious people are involved in this new world of success and comfort which has come with the mass merchandising of banality and of stereotypes. But there is a noticeable fact about many of those who are intelligent. They tend to have a professional taste related to their work and a private taste which is at variance with their professional taste. They have to know how to deal expertly in cheesecake but they consider Leo Tolstoy to have been a genius. If Leo Tolstoy were alive, they would honestly offer him a fabulous sum to write, hoping that he would be able to express and use all of his genius and produce at the same time both art and cheesecake. Leo Tolstoy would have to compete for his livelihood with the best-seller writers who know only how to warm the heart with stale stereotypes, and the journalists who know only a formula. I have before me a pocket edition of Tolstoy's stories, *Polikusha* and *Two Hussars*. On the inside cover is quoted: "Tolstoy possessed a thousand eyes." On the back cover, I read the blurbs:

"POLIKUSHA

"Dissipated and ignorant—slave to drink and earthy passion—a peasant risks all in an attempt to satisfy a high-born lady's unusual request."

"TWO HUSSARS

"The Count was a gambler, duelist and casual seducer; the wild oats he sowed came back to tempt his strait-laced son."

The copy is merely standard. But it is not copy to describe the quality of a genius who wrote as though he had "a thousand eyes." Experts consider this kind of banal blurb to be necessary for merchandising. But this necessary copy is becoming the rule and it constitutes a reduction of the quality of important writing to the level of accepted plot and stereotypes. In other words, blurb copy is imitating advertising copy used for films, and films that are run of the mill at that. And frequently, in newspapers spread around the country, these blurbs are then used as book reviews. We cannot now fully know the long-run effects of these developments on our culture, yet we should note

and observe them. They appear, at least to this writer, to be examples of de Tocqueville's prediction that with our egalitarianism, there might be a leveling downward. Also, they threaten to create a society of robotized or semi-robotized consumers. At least, many examples could be cited to support a conclusion that this leveling downward is having such an effect; it may dominate our culture to a point of decline beyond which there may be no return.

Often, a juxtaposition is made between high-brow and low-brow. The critic of some of our rampant vulgarities is called an egghead. But this is mere irrelevant sneering. The question is not one of high-brow snobs versus low-brow democrats. This writer has met one or two low-brows in Hollywood who talk this language but who would stand more than a good chance of winning an Olympic medal in snobbery. The question at issue is one of sincerity. How can thought be nourished and how can creative impulse be kept influential in our society?

Sincerity in this context means to think, and to write what you believe out of inner impulse. But there is growing evidence that to do this becomes increasingly more difficult if one has to live off one's writing. Briefly, and to repeat, the man who thinks and writes out of inner impulses is often not adopting an economically intelligent course. Circumstances are developing so that he is likely, except for unexpected accidents, to have little support and few allies. More and more, he is required to live off his by-products. This is the fate rapidly developing for some of our writers and our intelligently serious people. It is an evolving fate which appears to be in store for a number of serious and sincere writers of the future. This, I say in all earnestness, and with no intent at bitterness or irony, is what is likely to happen with more than fair frequency in these times when we have never had it so good. It has happened before. Some of us saw it happen to Edgar Lee Masters, for instance. Some writers may have only two eyes rather than Tolstoy's thousand with which they can try to see this mysterious world of man. But whether they have two or a thousand eyes, they can do better and not become enslaved to a pen, or a typewriter and a desk, if they put rose-colored glasses over their two poor eyes.

The future will tell how much it means to the health of a society which is rapidly tending to make of rose-colored glasses the normal

means through which the world is seen. I make no predictions here. I only attempt to describe things as I see them and know them. And more and more, I see evidence that to survive, writers and thinkers will get on much better with those nicely polished rose-colored glasses. The glasses can have very beautiful shapes and the rims can be of fine quality. But the rose had better be in the glass. The world does not owe the artist or the thinker a living. Neither the world nor the publishing industry puts a gun to your head and forces you to go through the lonely agonies of work and to persist in writing as you see the world and according to your views and convictions, even when this makes no money and does not help to sell soapsuds or pills for acid indigestion. The artist and the thinking person makes his choice. I am not certain that he has grounds to complain. But granting this fully, I would add that we should abandon all of the double talk about art, literature, truth, and sincerity which fills our conversation, our publications, and the air waves. There is nothing wrong with tin cans. They are useful. But when we are selling tin cans, let's say that that is what we are doing.

Further, this is not a perfect world. Alternate systems to that of marketing books have evils, evils which are, in the long run, perhaps worse. The patronage system humiliated the artist and crystallized a reign of aristocratic values. A system of government control and ownership would, at the least, create bureaucracy and in its worst forms, give us a culture of slavery such as the Soviet Union has produced. Let's not cry into our beer. Let's merely say what is, and pinpoint what is happening. If the rich and powerful, on the one hand, and large masses of the people on the other, want what we have, they will continue to get it. In the face of such circumstances and developments, you do not give up if you think differently. You hope for little and go on as best you can. But you are within your moral right in calling hypocrisy by its name. And that is what we have today, in increasing volume.

Finally, this poses clear moral questions. What is the value of truth? What is the value of truth and sincerity in art? How necessary is it to the health of a society? How is it to be nourished in a democratic society? Should it be nourished? Should it, rather, be sacrificed and should the best talents a man has be harnessed to the aims of huckstering? Can there be growth toward sincerity in the realm of the new

communication media? If art and culture as we have known them in the past are important, then these questions are fair and meaningful and they call for serious answers, not cheap ones.

In the meantime, however, the growing weight of evidence points to the conclusion that the serious writer is a figure or a type on the decline. It is something which many such writers sense or know. They daily face their lives of permanent struggle and insecurity. They do plenty of whistling to keep up their courage. Nonetheless they see this truth, and so do at least some publishers. What they can give is not wanted as much as many other things are wanted. What they can give is just not too good a paying proposition. They receive a large reward in praise. Some of it is genuine; some of it is meaningless and should be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. And this is true in many parts of the free world. And what I say here is in the hearts of many writers. This I know.

Time to Rescue Our Politicians

By WILLIAM G. CARLETON

As we approach the congressional elections of 1958 and then head into the presidential election of 1960, which actually is already getting under way with the various candidates preening themselves for entry, it would be well for us to take stock of a situation dramatically underscored by the presidential campaign of 1956—the frenetic pace to which our leading politicians are now being subjected. The intensifying of personal political campaigning in America is a long-time trend, but it is now being accelerated in an alarming way. This trend and the problems it raises should be more generally understood.

During the 1956 preconvention presidential primary contests, a prominent member of the Indian Congress party, traveling in the United States, said to me: "I have an assured political career in India, but if I were an American, I would not want to go into politics at all, for in America there seems to be no such thing as a reasonably assured political career, and the paces you Americans put your politicians through is inhuman. How do your presidential candidates stand it?"

About the same time a British periodical observed that the ability to become President of the United States seems to consist of having an athlete's body and the capacity to lose a gargantuan amount of sleep. Only a sitting President, it remarked, can now make a reasonable run for the Presidency, and it questioned whether some of America's great Presidents of the past would have had the physical stamina to make a successful first run for the Presidency today.

Another British periodical has compared the great length and hectic pace of our presidential campaigns with the short and relatively

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casual pace of Britain's parliamentary elections. It was recalled that Clement Attlee, when leading the British Laborites through several national campaigns, would start out about ten o'clock of a morning of a typical campaign day. With Mrs. Attlee in the driver's seat of their modest family automobile, they would drive in leisurely fashion to the place Attlee was to speak that afternoon. Frequently the Attlees would have a basket-lunch by the side of the road. After the afternoon appearance, they would drive on unhurriedly for the big meeting that night.

Winston Churchill has spoken feelingly of the political talent that goes to waste in any society and of the social losses that result, and he has said that the American political system wastes more political talent than any other democratic society in the world. If the current difficulties of political life in America continue to increase, as they have been doing in this century, more and more of our leaders with sense and self-respect—and the feel for sheer physical survival—will simply refuse to submit to the brutalities of the system.

II

In 1956, I witnessed at close range the presidential primary in Florida, and from what I saw I would say that the observations of foreigners about our political campaigns are not much exaggerated. From February to May 29, both Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver did several extended stints of furious campaigning in this state. In between times they flew away to campaign in the same furious fashion in other states. While in Florida they travelled many miles each day, delivered from ten to fifteen speeches a day, and in between speeches they made scores of nonspeaking appearances, supervised organization work, held conferences, gave interviews, sought and gave advice, answered correspondence, and for hours on end were in long-distance telephone communications with supporters in all parts of the country. In addition, they pumped the hands of thousands of people on street corners and in stores, filling stations, factories, restaurants, hotel lobbies, civic clubs, churches, and schools. They trekked doggedly through the orange groves and around courthouse squares. Sometimes they even rode in public buses from one engagement to the next, conversing with fellow passengers. During the

closing days of this frenetic ordeal, one of the dazed candidates actually shook hands, mechanical fashion, with an inanimate mannequin in a department store.

To the physical and nervous wear and tear was added a psychological frustration at not being able to read the newspapers, keep informed on public affairs, think things through, compose creditable speeches, say new things or old things in new ways. Neither candidate had enough campaign money to make effective use of statewide radio and television hookups, but both used the free facilities of local stations just enough to make their subsequent speeches before live audiences seem "old stuff." For the sensitive candidate this inability to find time to read, to think, and to compose speeches acceptable to one's self is particularly trying. During such an experience a conscientious man is likely to grow hesitant, self-conscious, apologetic, and even a bit schizophrenic.

In the midst of the Florida campaign, the *St. Petersburg Times* commented on Stevenson's ruddy appearance, his Florida sun-tan. Sun-tan? It was the red face which comes from physical overexertion and nervous excitement—the same kind of red face "Shay" Minton had in the midst of the Indiana senatorial campaign in 1934, that Claude Pepper had in the midst of the Florida senatorial campaigns of 1944 and 1950. The telltale evidence of the "campaign jag" is unmistakable—the tomato redness of the face, the puffy bags under the eyes, the sagging shoulders. By the end of the recent Florida campaign, even the indefatigable Kefauver bore all the physical marks of the campaign bender.

For those candidates who survive the gruelling primaries and win party nominations, there is then the equally gruelling general election campaign, extending from late summer to November. And then in November those who are catapulted into the actual responsibilities of government must forthwith know all the answers and make responsible decisions about policies, programs, and appointments without a decent interval of rest and reflection. The first three months in office are always the hardest. Thus for over a year—beginning with the preprimary and preconvention fights and extending through the primary fights, the convention fight, the election campaign proper, induction into office, and the crucial first months on the job—one in America who wins a governorship or a senatorship or the Presidency must

submit his body and nervous system to continuous rigors that are harrowing and torturous. How fit are our high officials to govern after such an ordeal? Louis Bean has revealed how the life expectancy of a contemporary President is progressively being reduced below the life expectancy of the general population in the same age brackets.

Not only in the presidential contest but in all political contests the activities of the candidates have been arduously stepped up during the past few decades. When I first migrated to Florida, back in the 1920's, the gubernatorial candidates made two or three speeches a day—one or two in the leading communities outside the county seat and a night speech at the courthouse square. Today, Florida's gubernatorial candidates personally visit the smallest communities of every county and make from ten to fifteen speeches a day. A runner-up for the Florida gubernatorial nomination in 1940 told me that toward the end of the campaign he was literally punch-drunk, that he did not even recognize the towns in which he was speaking—they all blurred together in a fantastic nightmare. Since 1936, two of Florida's governors became gray-headed during the campaign and the first months in office, three were seriously ill while in office, and one died of a heart ailment, generally believed to have been caused by the strain of his election campaign.

III

Political campaigns have always been difficult in America because of the huge size of the constituencies and the democratic tradition which compels candidates to be "just folks," mingle with the crowds, shake hands, and call voters by their names.

During the nineteenth century, however, campaigns were relatively easy by twentieth-century standards. Nominations were made by caucuses and conventions. Until the mid-nineteenth century most governors and until 1914 United States senators were elected by the legislatures. There was a tradition that the "office sought the man," and it was deemed unseemly for a candidate for governor or senator or President to appear to be too active in his own behalf.

A presidential candidate in the early and middle years of the Republic remained at his home, where he carried on a large political correspondence and where supporters visited him for political con-

ferences. Important declarations of policy were made informally by personal letters. Occasionally one of these personal letters would be carried by the "public prints" and become a point of controversy during the campaign. Jefferson organized a political party by remaining quietly at Monticello and conducting a voluminous correspondence with politicians. Even so popular a mass orator as Henry Clay rarely left his Ashland home during his campaigns for the Presidency, and in 1844 it was Clay's Raleigh letter, and not any campaign speech, which became the chief issue of his campaign. When in 1840, William Henry Harrison, the Whig candidate for President, made several journeys to old battlefields in his home state of Ohio and spoke on platitudinous subjects to "acres of people," his activities were occasion for surprised comments. These Harrison forays did not change the tradition that usually kept a presidential nominee at home. In 1860, Lincoln waged his crucial contest for the Presidency from his home at Springfield. Stephen A. Douglas, the nominee of the Northern Democrats, made a trip of speech-making through the South, but it was generally conceded that he did this to carry his Union message to that section in an attempt to prevent secession, and not to further the interest of his own candidacy, which was thought to be hopeless even by him. President Johnson's "swing around the circle" during the congressional election of 1866 did great harm to his party of moderates. Horace Greeley in 1872 and James G. Blaine in 1884 made national tours which by our standards were restrained and leisurely, but it is doubtful if these tours helped them politically.

William Jennings Bryan in 1896 was the first to make a barnstorming presidential campaign tour in the modern manner. Theodore Roosevelt, in 1912, was the first presidential candidate to appear at a national convention and make a head-on personal fight for the nomination. The Republican National Convention of 1920 was the first at which all the leading candidates for a presidential nomination appeared in person at a nominating convention to conduct their own campaigns. Today, after the nominee is chosen, he depends far less than he once did upon the campaign efforts of senators, governors, and other political leaders and much more upon his own speeches, appearances, and exertions.

On the state level, too, the tempo of personal campaigning, compared to the "old days," has been stepped up to an incredible pace. I

recall the campaign visits of the late Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana to my home town of Evansville during the first decade of the century. Beveridge would usually arrive at mid-morning from some neighboring county seat where he had spoken the night before. The "great man" would be met by a delegation of bigwigs and escorted to the St. George Hotel, where he would freshen up. After that, he would be taken to lunch by the county's leading Republican politicians. Then, behind a brace of fine horses, he would be driven "around the loop," to sniff the brisk autumnal air, after which he would return to his hotel suite to rest and to polish his oration. That night he would speak to a packed audience at Evans Hall. He did not seek out the crowd; instead, the crowd came to him.

Before the days of coverage by the press associations and before the days of radio and television, politicians could compose one set speech and use it during the whole campaign. It became a better speech the more it was delivered. In the Illinois senatorial campaign of 1858, both Lincoln and Douglas were making essentially the same speeches in October that they had made in August, but by October they were saying the same things in more concise and penetrating ways. I once heard Governor Tom Marshall of Indiana (later Wilson's Vice-President and author of the famous saying about the five-cent cigar) brag that during his gubernatorial campaign of 1908 he had made two hundred speeches. (Incidentally this was just about an average of only two speeches for every county in Indiana.) Mrs. Marshall interrupted to say: "No, Tom, you did not make two hundred speeches; you made the same speech two hundred times."

Mass media of communication are also making obsolete the type of political speech easiest to compose and most convincing to an average audience—the omnibus or catch-all speech which runs the gamut of all the "issues." "Sunny" Jim Watson of Indiana, in his cynically realistic fashion, used to put it this way: "The most persuasive Republican speech is one that gives five minutes to the great wickedness of the Democrats, five minutes to the noble achievements of the Republicans, ten minutes to the sins of Grover Cleveland and his panic, ten minutes to Republican aid to the veterans, fifteen minutes to the bloody shirt, and fifteen minutes to the protective tariff as the fountainhead of all prosperity for businessmen, farmers, and workers."

Today, a candidate cannot repeat a set speech covering all the issues. He uses radio and television just enough to be compelled to concentrate on one issue at one place and another issue at another place. He must say something new each time. Otherwise he fears that what he says is "old stuff" to those who have listened to him on radio or television. This makes it hard on a candidate, and the candidate's audience often leaves dissatisfied at not hearing the other issues discussed. If the candidate could use radio and television in a systematic way, he could discuss one issue at one weekly appearance, another issue at the next weekly appearance, and so on; and then candidate and listeners could feel that they had covered all the issues together. Today, one community hears one issue discussed, another community another issue, but all communities do not get the chance to hear the candidate discuss all the issues. The brief newspaper reports of speeches, carried by the press associations, are not in any sense adequate substitutes for hearing the speeches themselves.

The American politician, then, because of America's large constituencies and the democratic tradition of folksiness, has always had an unusually hard row to hoe. But with the passing decades, the difficulties of the American politician have increased. Many causes have contributed to this growing hardship: the extension of the franchise; popular election of officials formerly selected by the legislatures; the decline of the caucus and then of the convention methods of making party nominations; the adoption of popular primaries in most of the states and the growing national importance of the presidential primaries in about a third of the states; the enormous increase in population in all of the still-extensive constituencies; the rise to great influence of more and better organized pressure groups and of mass pressure groups; and the use of radio and television just enough to kill the effectiveness of the old political techniques but not enough to develop new political techniques in harmony with the new mass media.

IV

In this age of mass democracy we cannot, of course, go back to the days when a few notabilities hand-picked the party nominees in the localities, the states, and the nation. We cannot go back to the era of

the caucuses and the old-fashioned conventions. Even in those states (and they are in the majority) where state conventions pick the delegates to the national conventions, these state conventions today are usually composed of delegates elected in primaries.

Relatively few would want to return to a system in which very frequently the presidential nominees did not represent the majority will of the rank and file of party members—as in the cases of Democrat Polk in 1844, Democrat Cass in 1848, Democrat Pierce and Whig Scott in 1852, Democrat Seymour in 1868, Liberal Republican Greeley in 1872, Republican Hayes in 1876, Democrat Hancock and Republican Garfield in 1880, Republican Harrison in 1888, Democrat Parker in 1904, Republican Taft in 1912, Democrat Cox and Republican Harding in 1920, and Democrat Davis in 1924. Most people would recoil sharply from repetitions of situations which made possible the "Taft steal" of 1912, the manipulations of the senatorial cabal which produced a Harding in 1920, and the Kilkenny spectacle of the Democratic Madison Square Garden fiasco of 1924.

Mass politics today requires that the politician get his message to more and more people. It is paradoxical that the increasing personal activity of the candidates has coincided with the increased prevalence of radio and television communication. In spite of widening technical possiblilities for getting directly to the voter without personal contact, the personal contacts have increased enormously. For the politician has not taken advantage of radio and television, and he has been prevented from doing so by their prohibitive costs.

Why should not adequate radio and television time be made available at low cost to candidates and political parties? Radio and television outlets owe their very existence to government licenses. Their businesses are literally created and made possible by government franchise. Let the state and federal governments pay reasonable and legally-fixed rates for campaign radio and television broadcasts and for some newspaper advertising. (The candidates and parties would be free to buy some additional time.) This would mean, of course, that taxpayers would foot much of the bill for political campaigning; but why shouldn't the taxpayers foot much of it? There was a time in our history when political organizations had to furnish the very ballots used in our official elections. Governments in America now pay all the costs of the official balloting itself—the costs of printing

ballots, providing polling places, counting the ballots. Why should not governments also pay some of the legitimate campaign costs? The campaign should be considered as much a part of the official democratic process as the balloting itself.

The costs would seem large, but compared with the costs of a few fighter planes, or a few submarines, or a few shipping or airplane subsidies, or a few sewers, or a short road or two, they would not be large at all. If for a time we still refuse to make the most important of the campaign expenses a part of our government budgets, it will not be because of the costs; it will be because we have not yet come to think of campaign expenses as legitimate costs to be borne by the taxpayers. In time our common sense and democratic values will bring us to think in these terms as a matter of course, just as we now think it normal and natural that the local governments pay the costs of voting booths, election clerks and inspectors, voting machines, ballots, and tabulating the votes.

And the radio and television public—will not a large part of it complain at having to listen to more political programs? Of course it will, just as it complains about the commercials. But political campaigning, like advertising, is among the inescapable facts of life in America.

Political campaigning in democratic America will always be hard on the politicians, particularly on the top-flight national politicians. But there are ways to lighten the difficulties somewhat. Why should all the sacrifices be borne by the politicians? Why should politicians be put upon the rack of torment? Why should we demand their very hides? It is time to rescue our politicians, particularly our top-flight politicians. It is high time that some of their burdens be partially shared by the radio, the television, the newspaper, the taxpayers, and the public generally.

If the major part of campaigning were transferred from the hustings to radio and television, the motor type of politician would have an even more difficult time, but the intellectually able politician would have a much easier time. The energies now used in physical activities would be used to prepare better and more inclusive statements of issues, policies, and programs. This would be a relief to the desirable type of politician and a gain for the public.

Since the turn of the century, Americans have been debating the

question of money in politics: the dangers of private campaign contributors influencing the decisions of the public officials they help elect; the undue influence of the big money on government policies; the unfairness and the undemocratic implications of conservative candidates and parties having more to spend than their liberal opponents. All of these are important considerations moving us to solutions, but the most important and immediate consideration is to rescue our politicians from the increasingly cruel tortures of intensifying personal campaigning.

If reasonable and government-paid-for radio and television time in measurable doses, and possibly newspaper advertising, too, are to be allocated to candidates and political parties, how are the bona-fide candidates and parties to be distinguished from the spurious ones? What is to prevent the mushrooming of phony candidates and parties, and their "muscling in" for free advertising, with consequent outlandish wastes in radio and television time and the exhausting of the public's patience?

This problem is not as difficult as it is generally presumed to be. The filing fees of candidates in the primaries might be raised considerably. Better still, the number of names of qualified voters required to be appended to the filing petitions of candidates in local and state primaries might be increased enormously. These and other devices might be used to prevent frivolous candidacies.

The preconvention campaigns of the presidential candidates will present peculiar difficulties, yet these are the very candidates in special need of help because they must individually, without benefit of party organization and props, make an appeal to the mass democracy of the nation. Increasingly, they must make themselves national celebrities if they are to have any real chance for the nomination. (Beginning with 1928, the national nominating conventions of both parties have picked as presidential nominees, in almost every case, not only a national favorite, but *the* national favorite; the days of a dark horse, of a favorite son, of even a national favorite who is not *the* national favorite are over.) But when would a candidate for President be a bona-fide national candidate entitled to government campaign aid for his radio and television time and newspaper advertising? Would he have to file in the presidential primaries of the states? If so, in how many states? Would state laws be stringent enough in guarding against

frivolous candidates? Would the candidate be entitled to state aid, federal aid, or both? These are just a few of the questions that would arise; and they are difficult; but they are not insuperable.

After the nominations had been made and during the presidential election campaign, each of the major parties would be entitled to an equal amount of radio and television time and newspaper advertising at federal expense. Time and advertising for minor parties might be allocated on the basis of total votes cast in the previous presidential election. New parties which had not been on the ballots in the previous election might qualify for time and advertising at federal expense by virtue of their getting on the official ballots of a certain number of states, and they might get on these official ballots by being required under state law to round up a large number of signatures of qualified voters to their electoral petitions. In general, the same sort of rules might be applied in state and local elections, but here, of course, the costs would be borne by the state and local governments.

Admittedly there are many technical and detailed difficulties, but these can be worked out by legislators, once legislators and the public are aroused by the problem. We will surely discover ways to rescue our harassed politicians from their present untenable plight when once we realize the individual cruelty—and social gravity—of the situation.

State of the Classics

By Richard Emil Braun

He was the end of a healthy madness,
that old old scholar of New Comedy
who published verses of Menander hidden
to all others by that smudged papyrus.
The younger Hellenists scorned his vision,
for he was bred in old philology
while they were students of a new indifference
and had no blood for this good German passion.

Courtly monuments of Alexander
were ragged napkins on the scholar's desk,
illegible and lodged in celluloid
until a visitation by the author
(snide reviewers wrote "apocalyptic")
revealed the text, but the old classicist
was strong in his tradition and declared
his method was the purest scientific.

There was student life in noisy cellars
once, and a pedantry of tune and beer
and brazen hair echoed the work of daytime
with its precious bricabrac. Philologers
would vaunt their close science and nice system
yet with a Faustian clarity they saw
these were refinements on a demon's game
of insight, humanized and set to custom.
Those were his days, he was their survival
who heard pure voices in his scraping pen;
discredit latterly arrived from those
who fear all lust over their own blood's level.

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Afterthoughts on Madison Avenue Politics

By STANLEY KELLEY

THINKING back on the last presidential campaign—the Joe Smith affair; the ladies who wore nylon stockings embroidered with party slogans; the automobile with two banners on its bumper, one reading, "His: Stevenson," the other, "Hers: Eisenhower"—thinking back on this, one is tempted to conclude with H. L. Mencken that, "Democracy may not be the best form of government, but it certainly is the most amusing."

If we asked ourselves instead, "What was it all for?" I think we would have to frame the answer in something like the following way. Political campaigns are a necessary part of our way of life because they are the primary instrument through which public opinion exerts its influence on the men and measures of government. The purpose of an election is simple. It is to decide who our public officials are to be. The purpose of the campaign is equally simple. It is to help insure that this decision will be a wise one. A choice between candidates would be meaningless if we knew nothing about their qualifications, their records, and their ideas. In the campaign, the politician has a chance to present his appeals systematically and intensively, and the public has the opportunity to compare and to take account.

This is not to say that these functions of the campaign have always been taken very seriously: the politician has not always been a very

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zealous educator. In the past, action—the kind of action that used to bring the Pendergast machine more votes than there were voters—has been found to speak louder than words. The reformer has had to work hard to make discussion a decisive factor in campaigns. He has had to work hard to eradicate political machines that made presentation of policy issues and qualified candidates something less than their first concern.

His labors have been at least partially rewarded, for one of the most important developments in the recent history of practical politics has been the decline and fall of the old-fashioned political boss. Frank Skeffington, hero of the best-selling novel *The Last Hurrah,* acknowledges the decline when he tells his nephew, "I suppose that I'm about the last of the old-style political leaders who's still alive and moving around." But Skeffington was not ready for the fall. When he is finally defeated, he is unable to understand why. He knows that it was neither betrayal nor any failure of organization. All he knows is that the old tricks didn't work.

He had good reason to be puzzled, because the boss's tricks were good ones. Heading a machine of ward and precinct lieutenants, he kept these followers in line by the skillful distribution of jobs and favors. His aim was to build a bloc of deliverable votes that would stick by him, regardless of changing candidates and issues—regardless, that is, of public discussion.

How did he go about it? The boss used a variety of methods, of course, some of them not very scrupulous, but to an extraordinary degree he exploited one motive—gratitude. He and his lieutenants sought to establish direct, personal ties with the voter. They found employment for the jobless, and food baskets for the hungry. They got Johnny out of trouble with the police and helped loyal friends fix their parking tickets. They gave out favors and hoped for a vote as a favor in return. In every sense, the business of collecting ballots was an all-year-round job. A campaign visit from the boss's precinct worker was often the visit of a man who had been a friend in need. In contrast, today's volunteer canvasser is usually a complete stranger, little more than a kind of human spot announcement.

What are the reasons, then, for the decline of the boss and the machine? There are several that seem to explain what has been

happening. The voter is no longer dependent on the boss's friendly welfare activities: we have unemployment insurance, social security, and departments of public welfare. The boss's followers have less to expect from him, for the extension of merit system civil service has taken away much of the glue that held the machine together. Then, too, machines depended on a certain stability of population. There is no place for the boss in neighborhoods where the turnover of population is rapid and neighbors do not know neighbors.

While the boss has been losing his power to deliver, politicians have *par force* been searching for new ways to reach voters and win their votes. More and more they have recognized that mass communication techniques are a powerful means of doing so. Mass propaganda has become a central weapon in their armory. In the 1952 campaign, for example, over half the campaign money spent at the national level went for publicity and propaganda purposes. The campaigns of today are less battles between disciplined blocs of voters, more battles within the mind of the individual mass media consumer.

The rise to prominence in politics of public relations and advertising men is a signal that this kind of change is taking place. These specialists have risen to prominence for a very simple reason: the lay politician knows that mass persuasion is a road to power, but he has found that the effective use of the mass media is a problem of baffling complexity. He needs the help of men who, by reason of experience and technical knowledge, are qualified to advise him. As a result, some public relations men have become permanent employees of political committees at both the state and national level, and in campaign season, many more are called into action. In a few places, independent public relations firms, offering their services to candidates, parties, and pressure groups for a fee, have become an integral part of the political scene.

There is obviously much that is clear gain in the rise of the public relations man and the fall of the boss. If the boss marched legions of voters to the polls who had already been bought by petty favors, then the public discussion of issues and candidates that preceded the event was little more than a pious sham. Most contemporary campaigners are at least convinced that talk makes a difference, that public discussion can be decisive in deciding who is elected.

It might seem mildly surprising that the public relations man has won so little praise for his work. Certainly not from the politicians, or, at least, not in public. In some groups Madison Avenue has replaced Wall Street as the symbol of all that is evil. During the 1952 campaign, General Eisenhower spoke of press agents—Democratic press agents—as men who manufactured emergencies as "the rugs under which they swept stupidity, blunders, and corruption." In his address accepting his party's nomination last year, Adlai Stevenson said: "This idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal—that you can gather votes like box tops—is, I think, the ultimate indignity to the democratic process." Public relations men could easily be offended at this apparent ingratitude.

The novelist has been no kinder. Public relations and advertising men are featured characters in three relatively recent novels: *The Golden Kazoo, The Build-up Boys* and *Nobody's Fool*. The principal political contribution of *The Golden Kazoo's* advertising man is a plan to make the voters believe that his candidate's wife is expecting a baby. The protagonist of *The Build-up Boys* is a bright young man who has made a vacuous nonentity into a potential cabinet member before his conscience catches up with him. The central character of *Nobody's Fool* quits public relations when his agency's promotion stunt begins to develop into a springboard for political demagoguery. The novelist, it seems, conceives of public relations as an occupation where the poignancy of guilt feelings are directly related to the degree of success.

And the rise of the public relations man in politics has been received with anxiety, not only by politicians and novelists, but also by the better informed segments of the public. Why? I think it is because we have seen the public relations man too often use the techniques of mass communication, potentially so powerful as methods for spreading knowledge, to destroy character, to deceive, and to distort. The bill of particulars could be a long one, though it would be less an indictment of the public relations man as such than an indictment of a whole range of propaganda practices in modern campaigns. This is at once less personal and more important. To see the method of democracy—discussion—avoided, rightly arouses indignation. To see it used for evil purposes is profoundly disturbing.

Public relations men deal in appearances. They have sometimes forgotten that appearances are supposed to represent reality. In a 1952 senatorial campaign, a Republican candidate ridiculed his opponent for having been a part of an administration that had used some 26,911 words in an Office of Price Stabilization order, and for what? To regulate the price of cabbage. There are, this candidate pointed out, only 266 words in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and but 297 words in the Ten Commandments. Like the candidate, editors in all parts of the country were pleased to have discovered this clever contrast that so neatly exposed the verbose ways of the bureaucrat. They ran it in fillers or made it the basis of editorials. This fun at the expense of Washington bureaucracy had one outstanding defect: There wasn't a word of truth in it. No OPS order on cabbage ever existed.

In a congressional race last year, one candidate distributed a campaign paper carrying pictures of four average citizens and their statements attacking his opponent. Again a difficulty: the photographs were of professional models, not of the persons they were supposed to picture. The names under the photographs had either been used without permission or were fictitious. Neither the models nor the persons named had made the statements attributed to them. When these facts were reported in the press, the campaign worker responsible was quoted as saying, "I'm simply amazed at all this fuss. This is standard operating procedure in advertising like this."

More common in campaigns than outright lies, perhaps, are various distortions of the truth. A public relations man once praised a colleague to me by saying, "He deals in facts. Of course, he may put them in such a way that you will draw a distorted conclusion, but he deals in facts."

Devising means to deceive with facts requires some intellectual agility, but there are several ways to do it. Certainly one of the most common is to present a strictly accurate piece of information out of context. In the Ohio senatorial contest of 1950, an opposition campaign pamphlet advised that Senator Robert A. Taft had opposed a sixty-five cent minimum wage. This was literally true. It was also true, however, that at the time he had done so he had been supporting a seventy-five cent rate.

Propagandists may confuse issues by making the object of their

attack appear to be what he is not. In the American Medical Association's long crusade against the Truman health insurance program, its strategists directed most of their fire, not against Senate Bill 1679 which embodied the Truman proposals, but against "socialized medicine." They charged, among other things, that socialized medicine would mean government assignment of patients to doctors and the abrogation of the privacy of medical records. Now however true this may have been regarding socialized medicine, it was not true of the Administration-sponsored health insurance bill, which contained specific guarantees to the contrary. One cannot help but feel that the public's right to know the policy alternatives would have been better served if the A.M.A. had met the administration's case as vigorously as it desired, but directly.

Oversimplification is still another form of distortion that permeates our political discussions. Professional campaigners commonly seek to limit their main selling points to two or three issues distilled into simple themes and slogans. This obsession with brevity in political discussion is evident in a publicity manual prepared last year by the Democratic National Committee for its party's candidates. Under the heading, "Your TV Performance," it advises, "Make it short and simple." For radio, it argues, "5-minute and 15-minute periods are long enough to give the listening audience an impression of the candidate and to get across the major campaign ideas." Spot announcements, it says, should be "a simple slogan or message that is memorable and lends itself to repetition." The section on campaign literature repeats the same monotonous formula with the heading, "Keep Your Literature Short." Governor Stevenson in the campaign just over became so discouraged with all this that he began to release memoranda on each of the major issues—documents that did not have to conform to the restrictions of length and entertainment value that are expected of a television speech. But he did not, by this means, solve the basic problem: that isues may go undiscussed, not because they are unimportant, but because they are not easily reduced to simple, primitive themes.

Still another deceptive device commonly used in the contemporary political campaign is the "front" organization. The public has become increasingly aware of how fronts can make the worse appear the

better cause, as knowledge of Communist party activities has become widespread. Unfortunately, the Communists are in no better position to claim credit for the invention of fronts than they are for the invention of the telephone. The practice of organizing fronts pervades our society and our campaigns. An investigation of campaign literature in the 1940 presidential race turned up dozens of identical leaflets and pamphlets being distributed in different parts of the country under many different—and high-sounding—auspices. This literature distribution was obviously centrally planned. By whom? We do not know, because whoever it was had taken considerable pains to hide his identity.

"Fronts" offer many advantages to campaigners. They give the appearance of growing, varied, and independent support. They are a way of pushing the kind of attacks that a candidate himself may not make without danger of backfire. They are a way of hiding the real interests behind a campaign. But they don't serve the public's interest in our election system, because they deprive the voter of an essential piece of information that he needs to evaluate any propaganda—its source. They are a way of confusing campaign communication and of distorting its purpose.

The bill of particulars against the professional propagandist in his role as campaigner would not be complete if it did not include an item that discussed the so-called "smear." That the character of a candidate as well as his views should be a subject of public comment is inevitable in a democracy. We vote, after all is said and done, for and against men. Certainly this does not mean, however, that libelous attacks on the loyalty or integrity of a candidate are any more admissible than such attacks would be were any other citizen their object. They are less so, in fact, for not only is the candidate's interest in his reputation at stake, but the public's interest in choosing the better man. The object of a smear may become a social cripple, but equally, the society which tolerates such treatment of its leaders is on its way toward becoming a crippled society.

The impunity with which smears are attempted is testimony that ordinary libel procedure is inadequate either as a preventive or as a remedy. It is too slow: elections are long decided before the courts can begin to act. It fails to recognize the special codes of

behavior which politicians live by. If a candidate is victorious in spite of a libel, he hesitates to appear vindictive. If a libeled candidate is defeated, he does not want to be a hard loser.

The smear also grows directly out of the exigencies of campaigning. One professional public relations man who has managed several candidates for high office recommends as a standard rule of procedure early attacks on incumbent officials. He advises—and these are his own words—". . . If you do not deflate the opposition candidate before your own campaign gets started, the odds are that you are going to be defeated." What better way is there to deflate the incumbent than to encourage doubts regarding his loyalty or honesty? If the doubts take root he will be defeated, not as a matter of party politics, but as a matter of patriotism. The smear gains force from our secret love of the sensational, and our traditional readiness to believe evil of the politician. If such tactics meant only the destruction of a public man's reputation, they would be utterly reprehensible. But they mean more than that. When respectable men are driven from public life or prevented from entering it, the public is the big loser.

A final count in this indictment of the practices of professional propagandists can fittingly be their proclivity for the last minute attack. This common maneuver has been the subject of recent comment by J. Russell Wiggins, editor of the *Washington Post and Times Herald,* who argues that newspapers should avoid reporting speeches that make last minute charges, the truth or falsity of which cannot be immediately ascertained.

One need not look far to see examples of the use politicians make of this strategy. The 1954 campaign saw a gubernatorial candidate charged, in a great fanfare of publicity and just two weeks before election day, with allegedly questionable business practices. For the remainder of the campaign new charges of the same kind were pressed. Since these transgressions were supposed to have occurred from seven to twenty-nine years previously, it is hardly probable that they were unknown to the candidate's opponents at the beginning of the campaign. It seems much more likely that the timing of the charges was dictated by a desire to bring them to the public's attention just before the election and just before there was time to present adequately the other side.

Widespread use of the kind of tactics just examined are the principal reason, I think, for public distrust of the professional propagandist in politics. Someone will surely point out that there is little that is new in all this, and in a certain sense, this is true. As Socrates observed long ago, "The partisan, when he is engaged in a dispute, cares nothing about the right of the question, but is anxious only to convince his hearers of his own assertions." The words of Darius, King of Persia, undoubtedly have soothed other consciences than his own: "If a lie is necessary, why not speak it? We are all after the same thing whether we lie or speak the truth: our own advantage."

Now, while we may accommodate ourselves more comfortably to old evils, they remain evils nonetheless. Furthermore, while the politician and public gullibility may not have changed a great deal since the times of Darius and of Socrates, the means by which the one may exploit the other, have. The communications revolution is a phenomenon of the late nineteenth and of the twentieth century and it has brought with it a relationship between public and politician that is genuinely novel. The theory of free speech, of democratic government, of campaigning, is a creation of an earlier time. It involved assumptions about communication that are no longer appropriate.

Mass communication is anonymous communication. The man who talks and the man who listens are often separated by vast distances. They may be only vaguely aware of each other's identity. Rarely is the mass media consumer able to check the accuracy of the information he receives through personal observation. A charge of disloyalty directed against a candidate very rightly engenders doubt—but doubt that few voters can test against their own knowledge of the candidate's character. Neither is the public often in a position to evaluate the charge by its source. The liar of the small face-to-face society soon developed a reputation as such. In our society, the liar may speak with many voices and under many names—and again and again.

Mass communication is communication of the few to the many. It has measurably increased our ability to spread information. It has made it possible to focus the attention of entire nations on particular events, issues, and personalities. But for whom has it made this possible?

The man who coined the phrase, "Talk is cheap," cannot have thought about the matter very thoroughly or very long. In the campaign of last year, five minutes time on a national television network cost about $10,000, and this was at bargain rates. The hard facts of economics limit participation in mass communication to groups with well filled treasuries. Mass communication techniques have made it possible to maneuver public opinion in the support of specific goals in a relatively short time. They do not insure that new leaders or new ideas will enjoy equal opportunities to become known. They involve no guarantee that a man may face his accusers in the public forum on equal terms. They have not materially increased the ability of the voters to consult with each other.

Mass communication is discontinuous communication. It creates a public forum in which there are no rules of order, where no man speaks by right, and where there are thousands of competing appeals for attention. Because the audience tunes in and out of political broadcasts it is difficult to develop a systematic discussion, a chain of reasoning. The politician is pushed, in fact, in the opposite direction: toward loading a few words with a maximum emotional content and firing them at his moving targets.

The public relations man approaches the job of mass persuasion pragmatically. He is not hired to corrupt the democratic process, nor has he any professional interest in doing so. The use of questionable propaganda practices in campaigns can be almost entirely explained—if not excused—when we understand the public relations man's real convictions about the limitations of his tools and of his audience. Not malice, but what he believes to be good strategy, usually determines his action.

The p.r. man loads his arguments with gimmicks because he believes that he can attract public attention in no other way. He believes that the public listens to political discussions only reluctantly.

He is devoted to sensationalism and the strategy of attack because he believes that the public can be more easily interested in a fight than in a straightforward discussion of policy. As one man expressed this idea, "Gillette has made a good thing out of fights for a long time." He believes also that many voters are *against* voters, apathetic unless stirred to discontent. He never forgets that the mass media are enter-

tainment media—that his political message must compete for an audience with professional entertainers. Often his solution is to make politics itself a form of entertainment.

The public relations man simplifies and distorts because he feels no confidence that the public will have the patience for complexity or the knowledge to notice that it is missing. Whatever words he may use to flatter the public's estimate of its own wisdom, he has the average citizen pegged as a man who gets his political education from headlines. In the words of one public relations counsel, "While the reading public is satisfied with partially digested opinions of political writers, the professional campaigner will match capsule phrases with capsule phrases, will counter partial quotes with tangent responses."

The public relations man often indulges in last minute attacks because he believes that not to do so will be to lose votes to boredom or counter-propaganda. Our campaigns begin slowly and warm gradually to their peak of heat in their last two weeks, because, by and large, they are planned that way.

The public relations man may let significant issues go undiscussed because he feels incapable of "selling" them in the time allotted him. This, I feel sure, was the basic objection of the professionals in Adlai Stevenson's camp to his use of the H-bomb testing issue. Powerful interests engage in year-round and well-financed propaganda efforts to standardize public attitudes on particular issues. Now, as one writer on public relations has pointed out, it is almost always cheaper—literally cheaper—to go along with a prevailing prejudice than it is to change it. It is little wonder that the professional campaigner often decides that silence is the better part of valor.

When we discuss these kinds of campaign propaganda practices and the reasons for their use, we cannot, unfortunately, forget that we are discussing the manner in which we are actually using our rights to free speech and to free elections. If I understand John Stuart Mill in his essay *On Liberty,* he believed free speech to be more than an abstract right—he believed it also to have a social purpose. It was a way of solving social and political problems by allowing all concerned to have their say—and to have their say on more or less equal terms. Free speech, in Mill's view, also involved a method of problem solving, and that was the method of debate. Rival leaders could bring their differing

interpretations of events and their proposals for action into the public forum. The public could listen and judge. Debate was the natural corrective to falsehood and distortion, for partisans could expose each other and the public could listen to both sides.

But does this happen in modern public discussion? Does it happen in campaigns? There is a great deal of evidence that it happens very imperfectly. Almost all recent studies of our elections show that voters tend to listen predominantly to those messages that reinforce their partisan inclinations. Nor do the partisans show any sustained interest in debate. They are involved not only in marketing a point of view but also in building an audience. If the more successful audience builder were to debate publicly with his opponent, he would be throwing away his advantage gratuitously. Yet if public discussion does lack the element of debate—if the two sides are not presented to the whole electorate—partisans are left to present the voter with their own pictures of reality, free of the natural check of interpretations that are different and of facts that don't fit.

It is disturbing that the professional propagandist will often take advantage of those conditions to spread false or distorted versions of reality, for there is a difference between recognizing weakness and exploiting it. In purely personal terms, however, there are mitigating circumstances. James Madison somewhere speaks of the "vicious" arts that win elections, and the key words in this statement are "vicious" and "win." If an undesirable practice is nevertheless efficacious, the temptation to use it must always be very great. The public relations man is hired to win.

Much more disturbing than the amorality of some practitioners of public relations is that their more questionable practices grow rather naturally out of the conditions under which public discussion takes place in an age of mass communication. Mass communication puts powerful instruments of persuasion in the hands of a few. The mass media are not well adapted to a politics of debate. Yet our traditional doctrine of free speech assumed equality of opportunity for all to make their views known. It assumed that competing ideas would confront each other in the forum. Can we any longer take for granted that our system of free discussion will work naturally—without any effort on our part—toward the goals we hope to reach by means of

it? Under modern conditions, is *laissez-faire* still a valid interpretation of free speech? This is the real issue that underlies public anxiety about Madison Avenue politics.

If it is true that judgment can be securely based only on knowledge, then it is true also that no other historical period has had instruments for the spread of knowledge so potentially effective as those possessed by our own. The mass media, manned by staffs of trained reporters, make accessible the inaccessible, make public the secret, make near the far removed. They are fast. They bring not only the printed word, but sight and sound, to the aid of communication, enabling the local man to hear and to visualize life in the greater world around him. They have reduced the unit costs of communication enormously.

But all of these propositions have their negative corollaries. While the mass media do make possible the widespread and rapid circulation of knowledge, they can also spread lies faster and farther than our ancestors dreamed possible. The very speed of communication they allow favors impetuous—even thoughtless—action. In earlier times, the immediate effect of a demagogue's words were limited to those within range of the unaided human voice. Today millions may listen to the demagogue on the very eve of an election. If this more nearly meets democratic specifications than do boss-run elections—and it does—it also puts us under the heavy obligation to show that democracy, when it is tried, can work.

If we want to succeed we will have to work on a number of fronts. We will have to raise the level of education in general and of political sophistication in particular. The mass media now make it possible to reach the great body of political apathetics and to manipulate their ignorance for political ends. Education is the only answer.

We must demand high standards of performance from the editors, reporters, and broadcasters who man the information media. They are in a position to use various devices that would emphasize the quality of debate in political discussion. Perhaps more than anyone else, they are in a position to see that political battles are conducted with some regard for the rules of fair play.

We must think hard to see if there are not laws that would help us to define acceptable campaign practices in an age of mass communi-

cation. The rights of free speech and free press have not been so rigidly interpreted by the courts as to foreclose all possibility of such legislation. To frame laws that will really help, however, will require a technical knowledge of the mass media and of the strategy of campaigning at least equal to that now in the hands of partisans. The skills and technical knowledge of public relations can be put to work also in the public interest.

We should, for instance, seriously consider taking steps to provide for a basic financial equality between parties and candidates. If we expect the opposition party to alert us to the failures of the party of the government, why are we so hesitant to insure that it will really be able to do so? Our libel laws could be reviewed; it should not be beyond human ingenuity to construct a procedure more in keeping with the political facts of life. The Florida law that requires candidates to serve notice in advance to their opponents of any charges to be made in the last days of a campaign should be carefully studied as a possible guide in meeting the problem of last minute attacks. Above all, we should try to think of ways to stimulate debate. Publicity pamphlets, as used in a few states, where opposing candidates present their arguments side by side, might be one answer. All these suggestions are tentative. The need, above all, is for invention.

The growth of the mass media has presented us with a powerful intellectual challenge: how to retain the benefits of free speech and of free elections under radically altered conditions of communication. The public's right to know has been long recognized, if not always honored. But the public also has a need to know, and if that need is to be served, public discussion must be made a valuable, as well as politically effective, part of our life. The alternative is to accept the cynical conclusion of Thomas Hobbes: ". . . democracy, in effect, is no more than an aristocracy of orators, sometimes interrupted by the temporary monarchy of one orator."

A STORY

The Friendly Monuments

By ERLING LARSEN

THE MAN sat in the motel writing. He had not closed the Venetian blinds; it was easy to observe him from the parking space outside. He was not young and he was not old. Children seeing him would not have called him an old man or a boy; they simply would have said there was a man there, sitting at the motel desk writing. But they would have felt he was not exactly like the other men they had seen there, that he was not simply a man. For one thing, he was writing. Sure, the motel room had a desk, small, stickily varnished, but it was mostly for holding ash trays and a shoe-box radio. There was not room on it for much besides that. Except whiskey bottles, of course. More than for ash trays, the desk was for whiskey bottles, and the usual writing done at that desk would be of postcards with X's on them or postcards with drawings of girls in bathing suits and holding great big fish and saying in the balloons, "Look what I caught at Northern Falls," so the receiver could laugh about who "I" was and what "I" caught. People writing those cards wouldn't move the radio or the bottles. This man was different; he had nothing on the desk but a pile of yellow paper, a thick pile, and he kept writing and writing.

Another thing that he did that was different was look at the mirror over the desk. He would stop writing and put his forehead in the palm of his hand, fingers raking his hair, and lean that way staring into the mirror and then, after a long unblinking stare, he would begin writing again. When he'd filled one of the yellow sheets with writing he'd turn in the chair and put the paper on the bed behind him. There was nobody on the bed; the man was alone in the motel room, writing.

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He had driven a long way that day. He was trying to write down what he had seen. That he did not find too hard to do; what he had seen he could describe. But as he wrote of those things he became more and more aware of what he had felt about them, more sharply aware that he could not describe the trees without telling how he had felt when he'd seen them. He spent more and more time looking into the mirror. He began to realize too that he was writing about himself. And he was not sure that he knew himself or that what he wrote, about the trees or about himself, was true. Nevertheless, he continued to write and to put the filled yellow sheets on the empty bed. He had opened the bed to get into it but had then stood looking at the pillows and gone instead to the little desk to write. The pages of writing he laid on the smooth unrumpled pale green spread at the foot of the bed. He could do this by turning a little in his chair. The motel room was very small.

All day he had driven up the long narrow river valley. The road had not always been in the valley itself nor in sight of the river but it had kept coming down from the flat farmland prairie through the eroded ravines to the valley bed to cross the river and to climb again to the high flat country on the other side. The road had been straight; the river and the valley had turned and twisted all day. The man had come a long way and now he was in the motel on the bank of the river. As he wrote, he could hear the water through the open window. Whenever the highway was still he could hear the river. He would hear the river and then far away a truck, engine roaring and tires hissing, whistling, sanding, coming nearer and louder, then loud enough in one near rush to drown out the sound of the water and finally passing and lessening and leaving the night to the water noises again, the persistent unchanging tinkling gurgling of the stream outside.

The man was far from home, one day's journey away. A day, he was thinking, is a day is a lifetime is immeasurable. This thought came to him as he stared into the mirror trying to plan the next sheet of writing. He had three sheets full and the fourth begun. But he was stopped again. What had stopped him was his memory of his wife's saying, "After all these years you ought to know what you want to do. That much at least you ought to know." Her saying that and his thinking about it and remembering it was what had made him sit

down to write instead of getting into the clean cool empty bed. He knew also that this, which subconsciously had started him writing, now consciously remembered had stopped him. He looked at himself in the mirror.

The whole way up the valley he had seen the monuments, all much alike and all with the same dates or dates within a few months of each other. He'd looked at many of them. He understood now that he'd been thinking of what his wife had said as he'd looked at them. Each time he'd seen one he'd stopped the car and read what was cut into the stone. They'd been easy to find, he hadn't had to hunt for them, they were in sight of the road, tall spikes of granite cubes piled one on another and chiseled to look rough and natural but usually with smooth edges at the joints. Each stood on a little plot of trampled brown grass that was sometimes enclosed by a rusty metal fence with spearheads on the palings but was always littered with broken beer bottles and crumpled beer cans and brittle-looking sun-baked waxed paper wrappings for bread and rolls and cake and doughnuts. Each monument named the committee which had erected it or been in charge of selecting the site and also gave the date and number of the legislative act that had authorized it. This information usually covered two sides of the big bottom cube, leaving the other two sides to tell about that war and the particular battle which had taken place "near here" or "two miles from here on the banks of the river."

At first the man had wondered about this. At one place the monument had been covered with the names of men who had died "northwest of here about three miles" and he'd thought if the men could see the monument they'd prefer to see it where they'd died, not merely somewhere in the same county, but he realized in time that the important names were the committee names and he could almost see a committee, a row of six bearded men in black frock coats and bow ties, each giving a speech telling what he'd done to make this great occasion possible. There would be a few mason's tools scattered about, some chips of red granite, a wooden platform built out of the last of the scaffolding and draped with flags like the little bows of colors the men would have in their buttonholes. And after the speeches were over and the dust from the horses and wagons departing down the hill had settled, the monument would stand there where the com-

mittee had wisely placed it, where people could find the committee names on this new granite claim-marker and forget just where the dying had taken place. Realizing this, the man looking into the mirror felt that the valley too was far away, in another country with strange customs, and that the war was far in the past even though it had happened less than a hundred years ago.

It had been an Indian war. And the man had thought of Indians that day almost as much as of his wife and what she'd said to him. He'd driven the length of this river valley and for long stretches he hadn't seen or had failed to see or had ignored any signs of civilization. Looking at himself now he wondered about that. The country had looked like Indian country except for the monuments to the men who'd taken it from the Indians. It had looked wild and clean, the river blue, the meadows green and uncropped, the wind moving over it freely from horizon to horizon and smelling only of earth and water and sun. This, he knew, had been a lie. Or a dream.

The lie had come home to him first in a dirty little town where the road markers had been almost lost among the signs advertising the same beer and the same cigarettes and the same newspaper and even the same grocery store as in the other little paper-blown auto-crowded two-story towns he'd driven through and he'd made a quick unexpected turn following the almost-missed road arrows to the right. And there before him by the railroad station, shorter by a good deal than the water tower, but fenced and grass-plotted, had been another red granite cube-piled monument. He'd stopped and read. This one had borne the name of one Indian named Running Bear, a bas-relief portrait of him or someone else, and the legend deeply graved, "Always a Friend of the Whites." From that town on he'd not felt that horizon wind nor smelled the sun. And he understood now that his wife's remark had been underlying his reaction as much as had the sight of that granite face with its big nose and its sightless unpupiled eyes.

"The Friendly" this Indian had been called. And there were other monuments to other "friendlies" too. At one place the big monument to the committee and the soldiers shared the same fenced plot with a shorter second monument, the two on a high treeless hill above the road and the river, the smaller one in memory of six "friendly Indians" who had helped the soldiers kill the other Indians. This was near the town where the man had decided to spend the night. It had been

growing dark and cloudy as the afternoon wore on. The man had been getting tired. It had been a long day and a long drive and he was far from home.

He ate in a little restaurant. It was crowded. There was only one empty booth. He sat down in an odor of onions and old hot grease and chewed cigar butts. The waitress came over to him.

"Someone's sitting here," she said.

The man was tired and realized he was a little silly when he automatically looked beside him and said, "I am."

"I mean," she said, smiling a pale smile, "it's taken." She was very patient and quiet.

"I'm sorry," the man said. He looked up at her. She was indeed pale in her white dress. She didn't wear any lipstick or make-up. Her eyes were almost colorless blue, not sightless but weary of seeing. She said, "There's a stool at the counter," and turned her head toward the back of the restaurant where the big beer signs were, all gold and red and bright, and the little signs below them on the dark wood partition saying, one, "Ladies," and the other, "Gentlemen."

The man went and sat at the counter. The stool was loose on its pedestal but it turned easily and he sat looking out into the street waiting for the pale girl to come for his order. There were plants in boxes in the window, plants with yellow and green spotted puffy diseased-looking leaves. Across the street the neon signs were lighted, glowing like freshly-spilled paint, wetly bright in the dusk.

The occupant of the booth came back. He came rubbing his hands together, walking crisply for an audience. He was a salesman, a young salesman just beginning to age, the curly hair just beginning to thin, the well-fed jowls just beginning to sag. He wore a grey flannel suit that had cost much less than it was supposed to appear to have cost, a pink shirt as advertised in every magazine with a circulation over four million, a narrow fatly-knotted black tie. He sat down and looked around.

The waitress was there at once with his steak. As she put it down the man at the counter heard her say, "I saved your place for you," and something else he didn't understand because she lowered her voice, but he knew vaguely what it was about because she tossed her head a little backward as if pointing at him with it. And then she stood there waiting for an answer or another order, her weight all on

one foot, the other leg bent and resting. But the salesman didn't even look up. So she came away from him, pivoting on her heel slowly, sadly, and came behind the counter to take the order there. This time she didn't bother to smile. She just said, "Beer?" when she'd written the order down.

"Coffee please," the man said. "Cream."

And she went away. The man turned to watch the street again. The salesman who had eaten half his steak by then stood up to walk across to the telephone which hung in one of those two-winged cubicles without a door or a roof. Everyone could hear what he said.

He said, "Hotel?" Then he said, "I want to check on my reservation." Then he gave his name. Then he spelled his name, more loudly than he'd given it. Then he said, "But I wrote you. And I've stayed there before." He listened again and said finally, "That's a fine way to treat—" and he stopped talking. He listened again a moment as if to someone who wasn't there and shrugged his shoulders hanging the phone away and walked back toward the booth and the rest of his steak. He did not rub his hands together. He looked at his audience sidewise quickly just once and ducked into his seat below the high partition.

The man at the counter wanted to say, "You see?" to the pale waitress. "We all can be cut. We all bleed. We all can be made to stop bouncing." But she was at the far back, leaning against the shelf of pies, smoking a cigarette, looking at the ceiling.

All these things the man remembered now in the motel, sitting at the little sticky-topped table, looking at himself in the mirror. And as he looked, chin in hand, he remembered two more things. One was the cop who had walked past the restaurant window after the salesman had sat down the second time. He was wearing one of the grey-green uniforms that all the cops in all the towns in the valley wore. He wore a Sam Browne belt and a big-butted pistol in a holster, the pistol belt ringed with brass cartridges. His star of office, bright as a new tin can, shone over his heart. And he walked past the window without looking in or up or to the left. He watched only the sidewalk before him as if he were afraid he'd fall tripping over a stretched thin wire. He was an old man, grey-haired, grey-faced, thin, slack-jawed, with deep curved grooves at the corners of his mouth, and he stooped a little as he walked almost hobbling on his aching flat

feet. And when he was past, the man remembered seeing the big sign pasted in the window of the variety store across the street. This was the second new thing he thought of at the desk. The sign said, "Ladies' nylon-trimmed panties, 2 pair for 88¢." Why this should be so sharply now in mind he could not think, unless it was the roughness of the lettering with the ink or paint running red from the big number 2, unless it was the number 2 itself and the thought of the two shafts on the treeless hill outside the town, which, at the time he'd been eating, would have been very black against the watery cloudy-red sunset across the river.

The man stood up and looked down at his papers. He walked over to the bathroom door, three big steps it was, lit a cigarette and walked past the desk to the door. He opened the door to look out at the night. It was early spring and the storm-door was still on but the glass had broken or been taken out of it. He leaned across the wooden frame as across the bottom of a split barn-door. There was a long line of shiny automobiles, one before each room, gleaming and reflecting yellow from the lights in the canopy that ran the length of the motel. The air was still and the river loud on the stillness.

The owner of the motel came along the walk. He was a little, thin, high-cheekboned man, with the wind-burned face of a farmer and the sharp look of the little man who always tries to carry bigger feed-sacks and dig deeper ditches faster than the slow muscled heavy men he works with. He stopped by the door. "The wind came a week ago and slammed the door back," he said and pointed. "Against the wall. Smashed the glass. I didn't put it back because I'm fixing to put in the screens."

"No flies yet," the man said.

The owner nodded and leaned against the mudguard of the man's car. He was going to talk.

So the man said, "You have a nice place here."

"I like it," the owner said and looked the length of the motel. "Seems like I'm always putting light bulbs in. They're burned out now by number 11 and number 2. Last week I put in three of them."

To say something, the man said, "They burn out all right."

"Oh, there's better places," the owner said. "I looked at lots of them. But this is nice. Summertimes I can have lawn chairs and umbrellas out in the grass there. And maybe I can run a strip of neon

along the front to dress it up if I can afford it. But I haven't figured the price of it yet. Payments is pretty heavy. There's better motels maybe but not what I could make a down payment on."

"It's nice," the man said. "Right by the river."

The owner nodded. "Where you from?"

"Westacre," the man said.

The owner looked puzzled.

"It's a little town," the man said. "Southeast of here. The other end of the valley."

"Oh, yes," the owner said. "What's your business?"

"I'm a salesman," the man said. "Not a very good one or a very rich one. I can't keep my mind on selling. I'm tired of hunting for things to sell worth selling. You know how salesmen are, one thing one year and another thing another."

The owner nodded.

Then the man said, "I think I really want to be a writer. But I'm pretty old to start." And he was amazed at having said it.

"A writer once stopped in the town near where we used to live," the owner said. "A newspaper writer. There was a scandal there, a murder and a scandal, and he was asking all questions. He was a drinking man, a real heavy drinker. We kind of figured he wasn't very happy."

"Well," the man said as if he were going to say more, but he stood away from the door instead.

And the owner said goodnight and walked away.

The man shut the door and sat down at the desk again. He thought, "I will not be a traitor to my people, to the human race. I will not be a friendly. I do not want, ever, for any committee to put up any monument to itself with me as an excuse. When the friendlies come and the committees and the land-grabbers and the powers, I want to be in a ravine hiding and watching them. I'll put prairie flowers and fresh grass in my headband so they will not see me when I watch them. I will lie in the ravine or on the prairie in the long grass waiting for my chance. I will lie in the wind and the rain and the dark. If I have to, I will do it alone. There may be better ideas. There may be ideas that will pay more. But none of them can I afford to buy."

And he began to write again about his trip up the long valley that stretched along the river from this motel to the town he lived in, to his home, to the wife who had told him that surely after all these years he should know what he wanted to do. He wanted to tell her his thoughts. He was very lonesome.

The Bird

By Robert S. Sward

A clotheslined-
Bird
Was peep-
Glancing, left
And to his right;
A second lined-bird
Glanced, heard
And doubled the peep; they flew:
And from thirty different birded-leaves,
Birds came, . . . thirty winging, unglancing
Semi-graygreens,—
Gray wreathe, and peep; in flight:
They flung out
Into a twisting-air cord,
That kept looping, and chirping back
Into the shape
Of a single bird
In chirping, peeping rest,—glancing
One peeping knot of a head
Left, and to its right.

Robert Sward's "The Last Railing" appeared in our spring, 1957 issue. He has been attending the Poetry Workshop at the University of Iowa.

The Pastor of Biebernheim

By FRANCIS RUSSELL

In the summer of 1888, two months after William II's coronation, the young curate Paul Schleicher-Velthusen was made pastor of the church at Biebernheim, a village of Kreis St. Goar in the Rhineland. Most young clergymen of good family would have considered the appointment to such a remote village as a penance, an exile for some moral lapse, but Pastor Schleicher-Velthusen loved Biebernheim from the moment of his arrival when he was met by the deaf retiring incumbent who took him to the half-timbered parsonage at the end of the village street, that was now to be his.

For Kreis St. Goar, the Pastor with his dashing turned-up moustache and his duelling scars was an eligible bachelor. The first Sunday that he preached, the church was fuller than it had been since Easter, and in the rows in front of him there were fluttery feminine hearts, not only from Biebernheim, but from St. Goar, Utzenhain and even St. Goarshausen across the Rhine. They responded warmly to his resonant voice, while young feminine minds appraised him coldly and calculated their chances. However, as the weeks rolled by in successive Sundays and the new pastor dined in turn with all his parishioners who had sufficient standing in the community to invite him, it became increasingly clear that he had no interest in women, in fact was not aware of the feminine as such. Temptation in all its ribbons and furbelows just did not affect him.

During the '90's the Pastor became more and more a typical Protestant rural clergyman. He accepted the world as he found it and as it seemed good to him—his Evangelical God, Luther's Bible, a middle-class conception of progress, the divine favor that guided the

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Francis Russell learned to know the Germany recreated here from two university years spent there before World War II, a year after the war with the British Army, and several visits since. Mr. Russell's most recent essay in the *Review* was his "Coolidge and the Boston Police Strike" (Winter, 1956-57).

affairs of the House of Hohenzollern (inscrutable though that sometimes appeared to him in the light of history), the rendering unto Cæsar those things which were Cæsar's—which meant support of the Kaiser, abstention of the Church from politics, and a condemnation of all Socialists and free-thinkers. During the decade he wrote two small books, *Mediaeval Legends of Kreis St. Goar* and *The Roman Occupation of Biebernheim*, being stimulated to the latter by the odds and ends of Roman tiling and an amphora of silver coins with the heads of Trajan and Hadrian on them which workmen had unearthed while they were digging among the foundations of the old inn, the Lindenhof, after it had burned down.

On taking his university degree the Pastor had served a year in the army at his own expense as a reserve lieutenant, and each subsequent autumn he spent three weeks on maneuvers, not as a chaplain, but as an infantry officer. Military service, he fully believed, was a duty that a Christian owed the state. He felt it a little naïve of his father, Major Schleicher-Velthusen (ret.) of the Stolp Hussars, to maintain that a clergyman was an officer in the army of God, but basically he was in agreement with him.

Shortly after his coming to Biebernheim his hair began to turn grey, although his moustache still kept its glossy gravity-defying smartness. He lived alone in the ramshackle parsonage, tended by a peasant woman of the village who came in each day to do the housework. To any of his relatives who visited Biebernheim and mentioned the size and dilapidated condition of his house, he answered that it suited him well enough, there was room for himself and his books and Ottocar his cat and any guest who came along. And he would point out that the shabby building was like the Sesenheim parsonage of Goethe's Strassburg student period.

In his spare time the Pastor tried to keep up his earlier literary interests, but the poets after Liliencron—the asphalt poets, the naturalists under Arno Holz and Hermann Conradi—were too alien to him. Like the threat of Socialism on the horizon they seemed a banking cloud in the fair sky of German culture. Turning away from such moderns he went back for assurance to the minnesingers. With them he felt at home; Hartmann von Aue whose *Der Arme Heinrich* he re-read and then for the first time the strange misty *Gregor vom Stein*; Wolfram von Eschenbach; above all his dearly-loved Walther von der

Vogelweide whose robust German antipapism delighted him almost as much as his lyrics. When he was depressed he read Gottfried Keller, chuckling to himself again and again over the *Zurich Tales*. He wrote a monograph about the Roman treasure-trove in Biebernheim and sent a copy of it to the director of the New Museum in Berlin who replied floridly at some length thanking him for his scholarly efforts and expressing the intention of paying the Pastor a visit when he next passed through the Rhineland—although he never did.

* * *

In the spring of 1900, when he was in his thirty-ninth year and long after everyone in St. Goar had given him up, Pastor Schleicher-Velthusen suddenly married Fanny Himmer, the daughter of the elementary-schoolmaster in the neighboring village of Niederburg where from time to time he had been in the habit of exchanging pulpits. The Himmers were descended from Huguenots who had come to Prussia after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes and who for all the years of their adoption still kept a French tradition and tended for the most part to marry among themselves. Fanny was eighteen and spirited in a quick Latin way that was looked at askance in the village. She dressed smartly, and her clothes were much better cut than those of the local arbitress, Baroness vom Rath. Everything she wore she made herself from designs in Paris magazines which she had sent from Cologne and which she was deft in copying. Her feathers and flounces were the envy of all the other young women of Niederburg, although the older ones sniffed and considered that such costumes verged on the immoral.

"What your daughter needs is a good hiding," said portly Pastor Bartenwerfer to Schoolmaster Himmer after Fanny had missed church services three Sundays in a row and had appeared on the fourth wearing an absurd hat with a tiny yellow bird perched on one side. Niederburg and all the oafish young men in it bored her even more than keeping house for her father, which she had done since her mother died five years before. She knew about Pastor Schleicher-Velthusen—as who did not in the Kreis—and about his father the Major in Pomerania and who his cousins the von Schleichers were. Whenever the Pastor appeared in the pulpit at Niederburg she watched him with

dark evaluating eyes. He was still handsome, still vigorous in spite of his grey hair—and some day he would come into property. Fanny decided one Sunday that she was going to marry him. Seventeen days afterward he proposed to her under the impression that it was his own idea.

On their honeymoon journey they had gone to visit the Major on his Pomeranian estate nine kilometers from Greifswald where he lived in half-pay retirement, making a brave but slowly failing effort to keep up appearances and at the same time remain solvent. Major Schleicher-Velthusen was charmed with Fanny. She in turn was delighted with Gut Hartstein, the small shabby rococo country house that by her Niederburg standards was a world of fashion and elegance. Each Saturday night at Hartstein they dressed for dinner and sometimes when their neighbor, old Freiherr von Hammerstein or some of the senior officers of the Greifswald garrison were invited, the Major would force his creaking corseted body into the frogged regimental tunic of the Stolp Hussars with the Pour Le Mérite Cross around his neck that he had won at Gravelotte in 1870. His eyeglass would glitter in the mild reflection of the candles, under the crystal chandelier with its unfortunate tendency to drip wax on guileless shoulders, while Bruno the general factotum stood behind his chair in an unaccustomed stiff shirt, white tie and embroidered waistcoat. The candlelight flickered across the mellow surface of the polished plate on the Biedermeier sideboard over which hung a sallow rather mocking portrait of the Major's father, a general and a friend of Blücher's, in high collar and spreading gold epaulettes.

The Major was a stubborn Junker, courtly in the pre-Bismarckian sense. Life at Hartstein, the bleak constant effort at keeping up pretences had reduced him inwardly to a state of dry-rot. However, his withered self warmed to this young woman in her low satin evening dress that displayed so admirably the softness of her white shoulders and arms. Her animated, humorously perplexed air intrigued him as she sat on his right, leaning ever so slightly in his direction. He understood how to value a pretty woman better than his son did. Fanny's taste in clothes he knew with the old instinct of his youth was unerring—little realizing that she had made her rustling dress with its nipped-in waist and full skirt in her own room in Niederburg. That was the way a real woman should be, he said to himself—a waist a

man could encompass with his two hands, rounded flanks that invited a caress.

On such evenings the Pastor had little to say. He respected his father, partly from a sense of duty, partly because of his service to his country—but he did not like him. The old man's mind was fixed in the past. He talked to Fanny in his gallant old-fashioned way, speaking of the War of Liberation and his grandmother's friendship with Queen Louise, and the Duke of Wellington whom he had seen in London once as a boy. Napoleon, the legend of his childhood, was still a living fact to him, more real because more permanent than that second William now on the throne whom he considered essentially a braggart stripling.

At his death the Major knew Hartstein would be sold up, that he would not be able to leave his children anything, that this charming young woman who bent so slightly toward him, the line between her firm breasts caressing the black watered silk, would have no cause to remember him with any kindness after he was gone. And he was sorry.

"You are too white a rose for this waste of Pomerania," he said, his courtesy veiling his regret as he stretched out his rheumatic hand with the snarled blue veins, just touching her rounded wrist with tips of his aged fingers.

That honeymoon journey was the first and last time that Fanny was ever to see the Major alive. The next time she saw him he would be in his coffin, a shrunken wax-like puppet, his closed eyes sunk into his skull, still in his pink hussar tunic with the Pour Le Mérite Cross which the Pastor detached just before they screwed down the coffin lid.

* * *

From Pomerania the young couple went back to the Rhineland by way of Berlin where they stayed a few days with the Pastor's uncle, Colonel von Schleicher, who held a minor administrative post at General Staff Headquarters on the Königsplatz. They visited the Pergamum Museum, the Hohenzollern Museum, William I's palace, the Zeughaus, and saw a production of *Arms and the Man* at the New Theatre. One evening they were guests of the Colonel at *The Flying Dutchman*. But Fanny was disappointed to find the royal box empty.

"You should stay with us in Berlin a while and be presented at court," said the kindly, fussy Colonel after the performance, staring

near-sightedly at Fanny through the pince-nez that had replaced his monocle as his eyesight deteriorated with age.

"It's not for a poor country parson's wife to be curtseying before royalty," said the Pastor didactically. For her part Fanny wished that it might have been.

After their return Biebernheim seemed small and mean to her, isolated in its fold of hills, shut off just the way her childhood had been. It was several weeks before her domestic instinct asserted itself and she began to settle down in her surroundings. The draughty dark parsonage with its cracked half-timbering and sagging roof-tree she did her best to make homely, tidied up her husband's books and papers until he had great difficulty in finding anything, replaced the surly old housekeeper by a young peasant girl and made muslin curtains for the narrow casement windows. But when it rained the roof leaked in a dozen places, spiders and earwigs built their nests under the rafters, beetles gnawed in the warped oak beams. The rooms were too cold in winter, too hot in summer, and in the spring the walls turned damp with mildew.

"We must really have a new parsonage," the Pastor kept on saying periodically for the next fourteen years. "I was hoping that we might after Father died—but he did mismanage his affairs so."

The years went by with no obvious change, Christmases followed Advents, the Rhine froze over, then before one knew it Lent had arrived. Easter, that quickening of the earth, brought a pagan joy to the village. The long succession of Sundays after Trinity followed, drifting into the heat-struck vista of summer days. After the first year Fanny was taken for granted as the Frau Pastor, losing her girlhood in the process, the animation that had first drawn her husband's attention to her, that had attracted those more experienced men, her father-in-law and the fussy Colonel. She never wore her watered silk evening dress again and, after her first child was born, she cut it up to make sofa cushions for the sitting room in preparation for the christening. The Pastor with the rigidity of approaching middle age never realized, never even suspected the disillusionment of his young bride or the change in her inner and outer self during that first year. She knew then that marriage was no cure-all, that far from altering one's life it merely added to one's care and subtracted from one's freedom. Sexually she was indifferent to her husband. The physical act, after

the first few painful experiences, was neither attractive nor repulsive to her. Sometimes if she were in a certain mood she enjoyed it in a vague warm way and would have prolonged it if she could. She realized it was something men demanded, that soothed their restlessness, and her Gallic percipience accepted the fact. "Two times a week makes a hundred and four," Dr. Martin Luther had said. The Pastor came to her every third or fourth night.

* * *

With the rest of Germany the village prospered in the first fourteen years of the twentieth century. There were the usual numbers of births and deaths, two emigrations to America, slightly more than the usual number of marriages, one illegitimate birth. The Pastor was liked for the most part no better and no less than his predecessor. He became plumper and more grizzled during the first decade of his marriage, while his wife subsided as best she could into the role of hausfrau, doing most of her own work, calling on the Baroness vom Rath every Wednesday afternoon and receiving on Friday, and sometimes on Sunday evening, a visit from her in return. Although both Fanny and her husband wanted children, their first child, Helmuth, was not born until 1905 just after their sixth wedding anniversary. Notburg followed in 1907, and their last child, Herzeleid,—who was not expected and was resented in prospect by the Frau Pastor—arrived in the spring of 1912. As Schoolmaster Himmer grew older and retired, his daughter seemed to draw closer to him than ever she had been as a girl. Once a week at least she walked over the hills to Niederburg to spend the afternoon sitting opposite him in the neat low kitchen, her knitting needles clicking like drumtaps as she talked about the children or domestic affairs or—her most insistent theme with the years—the scandalous condition of the parsonage.

After fifteen years the Pastor had become a captain in the reserve and company commander. Every autumn he returned from annual maneuvers, tanned, healthy, somewhat thinner and full of boyish enthusiasm. He enjoyed the change of life in the field with its combination of responsibilities and lack of responsibility. Though he did not admit it to himself he was even amused by the hoary and banal vulgarities of military life. And if he as a clergyman would never have told the old stories of the recruit and the peasant's daughter in the

haystack, his mouth beneath the Wilhelmine moustache twitched with amusement as he sat and listened in the shadows of the bivouac fire, watching the coarse animated faces of his men.

On the birth of the Pastor's second child, Schoolmaster Himmer gave him an embossed silver napkin ring with Hausherr—Head of the House—engraved on it. The parsonage became more derelict with each season in spite of all the angry efforts of the Frau Pastor. She would nag her husband about the need of a new one until he would finally lose his temper and tell her in an unaccustomed drillmaster voice that it was out of the question for the moment, the government would not advance him sufficient funds and he could not afford it himself. When he was angry she was afraid of him, yet at the same time admired his masculine display of temper.

With the growth of his family the Pastor drew himself more and more within the limits of his Rhineland village. Rarely did he go farther south than Bingen or to Coblenz in the north. After the Major's death, when the bankrupt little estate was sold up by creditors, he made his last trip to Pomerania and brought back a sewing table of his mother's that he had bought at the auction.

When the Landrat of St. Goar decided to compile a book on the middle Rhineland he asked both the Pastor and the Schoolmaster to contribute. The Landrat planned to call the book *Kreis St. Goar—A Book of the Homeland*, with illustrations by local artists and articles by amateurs of history in the vicinity. He felt that it would do his career no harm if it were brought to the attention of the right people in Berlin. The Schoolmaster wrote at length on the folklore of St. Goar, at such length that the Landrat had to cut out three-quarters of it. Pastor Schleicher-Velthusen's article was the second of *Four Town Sketches of the Middle Rhine* and dealt with the twin towns of St. Goar and St. Goarshausen.

By the time he reached fifty the Pastor had begun to attain a certain patriarchal dignity. His sermons were more sonorous and tended to repeat themselves—not that it mattered to the Biebernheimers who had never been in the habit of paying much attention to what their Pastor said on Sundays. Sometimes, as did so many others in the Germany of that period, he spoke earnestly of the coming war, but war seemed an impossible conception in the uneventful flow of village days. An eventual European outbreak the Pastor felt was in-

evitable—and although he did not face the fact, he would have welcomed it. Not that he was a militarist. He had read with approval, though qualified, Lieutenant Bilse's *Life in a Garrison Town* that had caused such a scandal in army circles. The Zabern affair had disturbed him greatly and his sympathies were all with the Alsatians and against those swaggering young officers who thought so highly of themselves they imagined they were free to cut down civilians. At the time of the Agadir incident he had expected war momentarily, a quick, just, righteous war that would demonstrate the force and tradition of German arms, a Godly war against free-thinking France on the one hand and the terrible Slav menace in the east. The Entente Cordiale was an iron encirclement of Germany. Just as Christ drove the money-changers from the temple, so had Christian Germany the right to defend herself against her enemies and preserve her sanctuary. The day would come!

* * *

In the summer of 1914 for some unexplained reason the swallows began to gather in July, perching in nervous twittering rows along the strings of new electric wires that had been set up the year before, fluttering under the weighted eaves of the ancient houses. The villagers regarded this as a bad omen, a portent of evil days to come. "The swallows are afraid," the old ones said. "They are flying away early. Next year they may not came back." For a cloud hung over Germany in those midsummer months. There was a tenseness to the air, like the motionless burdened atmosphere before a storm. As a stone dropped into a bottomless pool, the event of Sarajevo spread its ripples across the placid harvest-ripening surface of Europe. The thunderheads were mounting on the horizon, even though the Biebernheim peasants continued their work in the fields, while above them in the crystalline sky hawks circled upward slowly and relentlessly until they became black specks, pinpoints against the deep background, then finally were absorbed by it. Rumor succeeded rumor, like hawks circling into space, casting their shadows and vanishing. Governmental replies gave way to counter-replies, to ultimatums, in the turbulence beyond the placid range of Rhine hills. Mobilization orders telegraphed through were the final signal. The air seemed too weighed-down, too heavy for a man to breathe.

Then the storm broke. After forty-four years war came again! It was like a release, a flood of cool sweet air filling the valleys, following the course of the German Rhine. A man could raise his head once more, could breathe deep and remember his fathers before him.

The declaration of war was followed by an impromptu village festival. The church bell rang, there was a red-white-and-black flag on every house, and each face along the village street seemed to reflect a spirit of new-found unity. Class and social distinctions momentarily broke down, and men who had not spoken to each other for years suddenly found themselves talking together in friendly relaxation. Old Pabst the baker, a Socialist and unbeliever, on passing the Pastor on the street came over impulsively to seize his hand, and as the two men talked there were tears in his eyes. All the young men of the village who had received their call-up notices swaggered through the dusty lanes for their last day at home until the end of the war—a few weeks, a few months perhaps. Who knew?

At the St. Goar railway station schoolgirls held out cakes and chocolate and bouquets of flowers to the men in the troop trains rolling through, and young soldiers with careless buoyant faces leaned out and tried to kiss the older girls when the trains stopped. On the carriages were chalked caricatures of French and English soldiers, the latter almost always wearing kilts, under which were slogans: *Auf Wiedersehen auf dem Boulevard! Schnellzug! 83ten Regt. d. R. nach Paris.*

* * *

Sunday, August 11th, just a week after England had declared war on Germany, the Pastor preached his first war sermon. The small church was jammed so full that they were standing in the balcony which was by tradition reserved for the men. A quarter of these were already in uniform. The women sat downstairs. Some of them cried during the service. No one missed a word of what the Pastor said that Sunday. They knew, as well as he, that by the next week he would be an infantry officer in the field. Actually he was to spend a dull and eventless following Sunday in an officer's casino at Düsseldorf, but as he stood in the pulpit in his flowing Geneva gown on that particular day he both looked and felt heroic.

He began his sermon with the text, Exodus XVII, 11: *And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.*

"My dear countrymen, soldiers and comrades," said the Pastor looking down at the Biebernheim faces, so familiar and this time so strange. "An imposing picture it is which today's text presents to our souls. There is Israel, making its way through the desert, coming from the Red Sea and on toward Mount Sinai. But suddenly the heathen Amalekite people stop their progress and a battle ensues. Joshua leads the young men of Israel into the fray; swords rattle and meet, and a hotly contested, bloody struggle sets in down in the vale of Rephidim. But see, while the battle moves hither and thither, those devout men of God, Moses, Aaron and Hur, climb up the mountainside and stretch out their hands toward Heaven; they pray. Below in the valley the warring throng; up on the mountain the praying three. That is the warlike picture of our text.

"And again God has ordered: 'Choose men; go forth and fight against Amalek!' Soon many of our brothers will be there in combat. You have seen them, those thousands answering the call, 'Who will protect the German fatherland?' "

For fifteen minutes the Pastor spoke on the duty of prayer, "the golden key to the treasure chamber of God" in that troubled hour. That was the one offering the faithful Biebernheimers could make their young men who would soon according to God's inscrutable plan face the great test of battle. They at least should have the consolation that wherever they might be, on weary marches, in the thunder of battle, or if the worst should happen, in the terrible yet glorious hour of death, they would be followed and protected by the prayers of their loved ones at home.

"Are we then to suppose," the Pastor asked his congregation finally,

> that our prayers will not be strong enough to open the gates for those in need, for the prisoners, for those pursued, and to place at their side a guardian angel?
>
> Our Lord liveth! Our great Ally still reigns. Our God liveth, the God who will not allow sin and crime to triumph, but who will conduct His holy cause. God Almighty who can seize upon the strongest walls as if they were cobwebs, and who can scatter the armies like grains of sand; the compassionate, the faithful God, who bears upon His heart the weal or woe

of every one of His children, and who hears every sigh and feels with us every sorrow.

Up in the Tauern Mountains, high above all, marvelous bells are hanging! They are not rung by human hands. Still and silent they hang in the sunshine. But when storms arise they begin to swing, they begin to ring, and their ringing is heard far down the valley.

God our Lord has hung prayer-bells in every human heart. Alas, in the sunshine and happiness of life they are mute and motionless. But when storms of misery and disaster overtake us, how they begin to ring!

And how it will strengthen, inspire, encourage our brothers, the thought: Thousands—nay, millions—at home bear us in their praying hearts. The King of all kings calls: 'Volunteers to the front! Who will pray for the fatherland?' Oh, if we could say: 'The King called and all, all came.' Let not a single one of us miss the summons. He is a man who knows how to pray!

History some day will describe the battles of these present days. However, man sees but what is before his eyes, and he can but tell what the wisdom of the leaders, the courage of his men, the sharpness of the weapons have done. Eternity, however, will disclose to our gaze more than that, will show us how the hidden unseen prayer of the faithful and believing has been a great power in these battles, and how once more the promise of old has been fulfilled: 'Call upon Me in thy distress, and I will save thee.'

A fateful hour has struck for our beloved fatherland.

Let us pray.

It was the briefest sermon that the Pastor had preached in his years at Biebernheim. His words boomed out, echoing from the struts and rafters and supports of the slate roof, and as an accompaniment to his resonant voice there were subdued sobs from the women in the congregation, and even some of the men were blowing their noses and wiping their cheeks afterward. Never had there been such a communion of brotherhood in the village, not even in the heroic days of 1870. "Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles," the congregation sang with lusty vigor at the end of the service, and then quite spontaneously each Biebernheimer while he sang reached out and took the hand of his neighbor. "Ueber Alles in der Welt!"

"Jerusalem is a city that is at unity with itself," thought the Pastor as he walked to the sacristy with his slow ecclesiastical tread. "Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem," he suddenly exclaimed aloud.

Three days later he left for Düsseldorf, having kept the exact hour a secret—for he wanted no elaborate village send-off. His baggage had been taken to the station the night before. Nevertheless as he walked

down the narrow dirt highway from Biebernheim for the last time with his wife and his three children, carrying Herzeleid in his arms, whenever he met a familiar village face he felt something of a layman's vanity in his uniform, his high-collared field-grey tunic that was just a little too tight for him, his black riding boots with the silver spurs that had belonged to his father. Helmuth hopped along beside him, in a short-trousered sailor suit and a hat with ribbons down the back, scarlet-cheeked, speechless with pride. Then as they made their way under the horse-chestnut trees by Ruin Rheinfels, and at the curve of the road glimpsed the elongated streak of the river below them, the Pastor wondered with a sudden clutching sense of emptiness if he would ever see that familiar sight again.

II

In the months and years to come the Pastor was never able to fix on any given moment, any set occasion when he had changed his point of view about the war. His mind was like a lump of ice: once it was solid; one did not notice it melting, or at most a rounded corner here and there—and then all of a sudden the old shape had dissolved, vanished. In 1914 they had all believed in a frisch-fröhlicher Krieg—a brisk-happy war—that would last six weeks, at most through the autumn, and teach the immoral French another richly deserved lesson. Then Kaiser and country could rest on their laurels. But the laurels, as the Pastor gradually discovered, had long since been cut down. His ultimate attitude toward the war was like the original force that had sent him into the Church—the result of no sudden conversion, no definite event that had struck him down like Saul and changed him overnight, but a slow accumulation of small incidents over a long period that brought his sluggish but essentially honest mind to the final point of self-realization.

From Düsseldorf he was sent out with a militia regiment to East Prussia where they were held in reserve for a number of months. After Hindenburg's great victory at Tannenberg and the subsequent anti-climax of the Austrian setbacks the regiment was partitioned and its companies placed at key points throughout an Austrian corps to stiffen up their more lax and less military allies. "Corset stays," the Germans of such mixed armies called themselves. In the recapture of Przemysl

the Pastor, commanding his own and two Austrian companies, won the Iron Cross Second Class.

After they had passed Przemysl there was no more fighting, only a few light skirmishes, and then what seemed an endless route march as they advanced day after day without resistance through a penetrating autumn drizzle along the road to Warsaw. One morning their column stopped for half an hour because a caisson ahead of them had been hit by a 75 concealed on the reverse slope of a small hill they were approaching. The gun was soon flanked and put out of action, but meanwhile two horses had been killed, the caisson wrecked, and one of the drivers—a tow-haired Frisian boy—lay by the roadside kicking his legs, screaming and frothing blood. The Pastor came up just as the medical officer was kneeling by the boy on the wet ground trying to quiet him enough to give him a hypodermic injection. He had been hit in the belly, a jagged slash from a piece of shrapnel where spurting blood, excrement and torn coils of purplish intestines were churned together under a quivering layer of pale skin. As the doctor inserted the needle in his arm, the boy gave an even sharper scream, retched and then collapsed, the vomit trickling down his lips, his fading eyes staring up at the rain. Looking down at that mutilated boy, the Pastor, who had seen death often enough now to become used to it, was uneasily aware of certain doubts of his own. In some quiet depths of his being a voice seemed to speak to him, a part of himself that was at the same time a stranger, that like an intruding stranger carried on a dialogue with him whether he was willing or not. Why did that fair-haired boy die out there in the rain? For his fatherland, that Germany might live—they all believed that. For nothing, the voice said. Faithful to his duty, may he rest in peace, the Pastor tried to tell himself. He died quite uselessly, the voice said. And the Pastor knew suddenly that the voice was right! He had to admit it. War was nothing but a child's game played with real soldiers—for life. That anyone, that he himself could have asked God to bless this carnage, was blasphemy.

That night as he lay on his camp cot in the temporary quarters of an abandoned peasant's cottage while Lieutenant Götz played skat with the Sergeant-Major in the next room, he knew that as long as he was in uniform he could never pray again either for victory or safety, his country or his family. "Thy will be done," he whispered

over and over in the troubled darkness. But God's will was not being done!

* * *

Dusty in summer, ice-blocked and arctic in winter, that lousy God-forsaken countryside with its vast sky and miserable huddled cabins stretched ahead of them without end. Lieutenant Götz wrote a poem in heroic couplets about the Polish lice. For the men, Poland with its General Mud was the most detestable country in the world.

Watching the glowing heatless sphere of the November sun drop behind a copse of withered oaks where the dessicated leaves still hung on the branches, the Pastor remembered his Rhine valley, the Sunday service, the faces of the villagers looking up at him as he stood in the pulpit. Afterward when he had taken off his Geneva gown in the sacristry and walked back to the house there would be the pleasant roast-meat smell of the Sunday dinner, the places set on a fresh white cloth, and his napkin ring with Hausherr on it next to the carving knife and fork at the head of the table.

But as the horizon reflected the brazen afterglow against the branches and a cold wind rattled the oak leaves, he saw the curving bowl of the sky above him, the arched stainless sky. Hidden though it might be by clouds and storms, it was the same sky everywhere, the same earth underneath. Man's earth it was, one small spinning satellite of a third-rate solar system in God's infiinity. Whether one was in Poland or hundreds of kilometers west was of no consequence except in a man's trivial scheme of things. Oaks like these grew on the Hunsrück behind Biebernheim. The same birds flew over in summer, the seasons followed each other in familiar succession—seed-time, harvest.

As he looked out over the shimmering landscape towards the Russian steppes the Pastor realized that he no longer believed in victory. It was a quiet conviction devoid of any fanaticism, that made him feel he had always so believed—if only he had had the time to think his thoughts through to their final conclusions. In Goethe's student years at Strassburg, Germany was more real, more truly German when its boundaries did not exist as a solid color on the map than the present sabre-rattling empire. Men had found in chauvinism a cheap substitute for religion. They were killing each other because of those map colors.

Life, the physical fact of living, came to him with enormous sweetness. Over the trees he could see a solitary planet like a red glowing lantern. One of the artillery horses whinnied, and far off there was the sound of firing. A Polish peasant plodded along the road with a bundle of sticks on his back. The Pastor could feel the temperature drop, like quicksilver being poured out of a jar. What is life? he asked himself, oblivious of the cold. Between the mysteries of birth and death there was only this brief illusive ever-shifting present that ran through one's fingers like grains of wheat. A mystery. Before the great mystery of creation all men were brothers. Strange as it might sound to that pompous mannequin in Berlin who loved to harangue in gold braid from the pulpit, the sixth commandment meant what it said. "Thou shalt not kill." God meant it absolutely—not "Thou shalt not kill, except when the fatherland calls, when you don't like your neighbors, when you fancy a little Wagnerian theatricals." Even when someone attacks you, "Thou shalt not kill." God meant it finally and utterly. He did not explain or enlarge, He commanded with those four brief words. Under His creation no man had the right to kill his brother, that destined brother whom God held in the palm of His hand, to whom He had for His own inscrutable reasons given free will. No man had that right, ever.

If all men were brothers under God—as they were—then each man had an equal share in the earth. In his slowly evolving beliefs, on the day-to-day marches as the winter set in, the Pastor came to realize that among other things he had become a socialist. For if one truly believed in God, if one loved one's neighbor as one's self, it seemed to him that one could not possibly own anything. Ownership was an absurd idea. As if one could own any tangible collection of molecules that had existed long before one was born and would continue long after one was dead and forgotten. How ridiculous that a belief in the communal ownership of property, in socialism, was the supposed hall-mark of the agnostic and the atheist! Religion, property religion, the religion that gave men its blessing to kill each other, that believed in the divine right of William II and his libertine son, was certainly the opiate of the people, one they would dispense with when these terrible days were over. But production for the use of all, communal effort for a communal goal—that was true Christianity, the agape.

The war, his minor part in it, was something the Pastor had to see through to the end whatever his present conviction. He had his responsibility to his men. It was like being on a runaway cart. There was no way off until one reached the bottom of the hill, unless of course the cart tipped over first. In his daily duties as company commander he was outwardly no different than at the beginning of the campaign. He spoke less with his two lieutenants who called him uncle, liked him, but preferred their own society. Evenings he spent more time with the soldiers in their quarters where he was, if he had only known it, unwelcome, trying to break down some of the caste barriers between the officer and the ranks.

At Dolrogin in a minor engagement by the baroque church he won the Iron Cross First Class, when an Austrian company broke and scattered under the enfilading fire of two Russian machine-gun posts. His own sergeant-major was wounded, Lieutenant Götz killed. He himself with a flesh wound in the shoulder and his left arm disabled, gathered the frightened remnants of the Austrians together with his own company and led them in a successful right flanking attack which opened up the way for the battalion behind them to advance. However, during their slow painful crawling through a bramble thicket and across a brook, as they neared the Russian position, a stick grenade tossed prematurely by one of his own men exploded near him and tore a three-cornered gash in his left buttock. Although stunned and shaken he pulled his wits together, sent his runner ahead to the nearest sergeant whose decimated platoon beyond the thicket was still tossing grenades. At that moment three Russians, no more than boys, came out with their hands in the air, one of them waving a white handkerchief. In spite of his wound the Pastor called out as loudly as he could, "Don't shoot them!" The blood was hot against his groin, and the sharpness of the pain made the winter landscape dance before his eyes. To his dismay he found that he had soiled himself.

From the dressing station at Kattowitz he was sent back to Berlin, and after two operations and ten weeks in the hospital he was allowed to go back to Biebernheim. Pale, his uniform flapping loosely on him, he arrived one midday at the St. Goar station. Fanny and the children were waiting for him. He saw her first, before the train had quite stopped, before she saw him, and he noticed with a sense of dismay like an electric shock that there were grey strands in her dark hair,

that her face seemed narrow and sharper, that she was no longer young. As he got down from the carriage with his invalid's dragging step he felt the hostility of time. Time consumed all things; it had eaten away over half his life already, it had scored his wife's face in passage.

During his convalescence he grew a beard as a reaction to the Wilhelmine moustache he had sported since his student days, and to cover up his old duelling scars. His recovery was slow. When he finally appeared before the military board in Cologne, in spite of the man-power shortage he was invalided out. While he was in the army his congregation had combined with that of the superannuated pastor of the collegiate church in St. Goar. It was still some months before he was able to appear in his old pulpit again. When he did he spoke softly, so softly that his voice carried with difficulty to the balcony, and his sermons were shorter—platitudes about peace, good-will and brotherly love that his parishioners assented to as easily as they disregarded them. The only difference was that the Pastor was in bitter earnest about what he said.

Each morning—as he had done before the war—he shut himself up in his dark study with its peeling walls. Because of the fuel shortage he tacked layers of felt stripping along the window ledges and the cracks of the doors, but the cold bothered him more than it used to. Chilled, he sat from nine to twelve at his desk, reading, pondering and taking voluminous notes. No one in the village, not even his wife, knew that he was a changed man. As a wounded officer with his two Iron Crosses, he was almost a local hero. His quietness, the shortness of his sermons when he resumed them, they attributed to his long convalescence.

Now, tentatively, he read what had been considered the forbidden books of his younger days: Haeckel, *The Life of Jesus*, neither of which changed his conviction of a God underlying the universe although the latter confirmed his bias against Rome. He turned to socialist literature with more enthusiasm. *Das Kapital*, however, he found a dreary and pedantic book except for the chapters on factory conditions and child labor in early nineteenth-century England which cut across his conscience like a whip. Yet for all Marx's ponderous qualities, his presumption of having been the ultimate discoverer of the law of the universe, it seemed to the Pastor that his theory of

surplus value was the one explanation of the polite predatory society in which he had grown up. That simplified view seemed to him common sense. Far from being anti-Christian this was merely applying the communal principles of early Christianity to the complications of an industrial era.

After the Armistice the Pastor formally joined the Social Democratic Party, walking into the local headquarters at Bingen unexpectedly one afternoon, giving his name and profession to the amazed minor functionary behind the desk. Nevertheless he was welcomed by the headquarters staff with an awkward heartiness by which they attempted to cover up their basic scorn of religion. For the most part they were time-serving party hacks, like most of the Social Democratic leaders, middle-aged politicians who had spent so much of their lives in opposition mouthing intransigent phrases about class war that their emergence in Berlin as the majority party bewildered rather than fortified them. Not for a generation had they any hope or even inclination for a really socialist society.

* * *

Although the Pastor never mentioned politics in church—for he believed that most of the ills of Lutheranism could be attributed to its official position under the Kaiser—he spoke at various Social Democratic meetings with a warmth and skill that surprised the local politicians. To reward him for his efforts they once put him on the Social Democratic election list as a candidate for the Reichstag. At that time, by some complicated system of proportionate representation, each party was given one Reichstag seat for each 60,000 votes polled across the country. No one at party headquarters had ever intended that Pastor Schleicher-Velthusen should take his seat as a Reichstag deputy. He was put low enough on the election list so that, barring a complete Social Democratic landslide, he hadn't a possibility of getting in.

The only time he ever broke his rule and mentioned politics from the pulpit was during the Kapp Putsch when, after his sermon, he made a personal appeal to his congregation to stand behind the legally elected government of the Republic by supporting the general strike. Otherwise his sermons were on the usual subjects of rural clergymen—harvest blessings, thanks to God for His provision, morality,

honesty and Sunday observance. In the shifting period after the war few in the village thought twice about the Pastor's politics. Most of the peasants voted Nationalist. The small number of Catholic families kept to their own Center Party. Baroness vom Rath still drove up the hill to church each Sunday in her carriage, still retained the same pleasant slightly condescending relationship with the Frau Pastor. But the Baroness herself was a monarchist and her only regret about the Kapp Putsch was that it hadn't been successful.

In theory the Pastor felt himself compelled to advocate women's rights. It strengthened his conviction of the essential rightness of the Weimar Republic to see women finally given the vote. Yet he could never quite overcome the feeling that women were inferior animals needing guidance.

For several years he corresponded with the secretary of the Society of Friends in London and received literature from them, including some pamphlets in German which he distributed to the elementary schoolmaster, Councillor Kneip from St. Goarshausen, young Baron vom Rath, and a few others whom he considered the thinking members of the community. The Friends confirmed him in his pacifism. He read a book on Gandhi and his passive resistance movement. To the Pastor the success of the general strike in bringing down Dr. Kapp and his usurpers was a proof of the efficacy of this gentle yet most potent weapon. Once the secretary sent him some pamphlets on birth control which in the end caused as painful an alteration in his thoughts as anything he had yet met in his political or religious revaluations.

Except for a brief adolescent encounter with a hotel chambermaid in Greifswald he had lived a celibate life until his marriage. Marriage, he had been brought up to believe, was essentially for procreative purposes, to raise a family and give a man the security and comfort of a good home. Now in postwar Germany security and comfort had gone by the board. The facts were different. A man couldn't support a wife and found a family the way he could in the old days. It was no use preaching the old moralities to a broken world where all the bridges had been smashed. He remembered Plato's phrase, "the sting of desire," and how somewhere in the *Dialogues* he had written that man's four basic needs were food, shelter, sleep, and sexual intercourse. These young men and women in this uncertain age would

either marry or commit fornication. There were no eunuchs today for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. Birth control was the only answer for such young people. They had better marry, for they would not burn in any case. That they could not afford or did not want children was their own affair. Painfully he had to admit that the object of marriage was the fulfilment of desire. The sexual impulse was a life force; one could not shut it out. Try to and it reappeared in a hundred illicit ways. The only moral solution was to make sexual experience possible without its former consequences, to encourage early marriage, even among university students. Two decent young people when they had matured should have each other and their union should be sanctified by church and state. If in the course of time they grew apart they should be allowed divorce by consent. People who were democratically free had the right to personal freedom. In his own village he had seen that the cruelest lot, the real hell on earth, was that of a couple who had come to hate each other but continued to live together, slaking their desire occasionally on each other's bodies, but still hating. No God would want such people to continue.

Let the clergymen talk about old-fashioned morality at their conferences, he thought. He knew what the old morality meant; the kept girls of the wealthier students of his university days, in the army those portable brothels labelled Freudenanstalt—Place of Joys—that the quartermaster corps sent up behind the rations and for which the men queued as if they were waiting for a meal. That was the morality of the Kaiser's Empire, like the stale air in the rooms of a Paris cocotte. Now in the democracy of the Republic he waited for a cleansing wind to sweep away such miserable vapors.

Wilson's Fourteen Points had seemed to the Pastor when he first heard of them—as he wrote to his cousin in the Foreign Office—a star in the west. Across the ocean at last there had arisen a statesman and a man, a democratic ruler whose mind did not operate in the narrow channels of empires, nationalism, prestige, secret treaties. Here was a Christian statesman whose view was broad enough to embrace humanity. For a while Wilson seemed to him a second Savior.

Then in the turbulent aftermath of the proclamation of the Weimar Republic the Pastor's rosier hopes faded. He never lost faith in socialism and kept his allegiance to the temporizing Social Democrats, but his enthusiasm was one of the minor casualties of the post-

war period. The Fourteen Points gave way to Versailles, to the terrible Clemenceau with his cotton gloves and his monomaniac thoughts of revenge. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg had been murdered by Free-Corps mercenaries. The courageous Erzberger was assassinated, then Walter Rathenau. One day when the Pastor was on his way to a religious conference in Düsseldorf he found himself on the outskirts of a Separatist parade that, as it approached the railway station, broke into a riot. Suddenly he saw two men run out from a doorway, stab a policeman in the back, and leave him in the gutter. The man's helmet rattled on the curb, he vomited what seemed quarts of blood, then shuddered and was dead—and all the while the Pastor stood in broad daylight with his back to the window of a shop advertising Agfa cameras, as if he were paralyzed, so astonished was he at the swiftness of this violent death.

The inflation progressed geometrically. A gross new-rich parvenu society appeared, Valuta-Schweine—like leeches fattening on the sick body of the Republic. The French occupied the Ruhr. Then as if it were a final blow, his uncle's friend, old wooden von Hindenburg the narrow-minded monarchist, defeated Dr. Marx for the presidency.

' ' '

One thing the Pastor was determined to do after the war. He would finally build the new parsonage for his wife. Dismayed, he realized how many years had gone by since he had brought her to what was never more than a peasant's cottage. All those years she had lived there. He was decided now. She and the children must at least have a decent roof over their heads.

With the money he had put by from his captain's pay, with the help of a master-builder he knew in Boppard, he had drawn up plans even before the war ended, but because of shortages of materials it wasn't until the spring of 1921 that they were able to break ground on the knoll he had bought just behind the church. Unfortunately the progress of inflation was more rapid than the progress of the house. Starting with what he thought was sufficient money the Pastor found that by the time the basement had been excavated, concrete foundations poured and the scaffolding of the first two stories run up he had used all his funds. He and Helmuth worked together with the car-

penters and later did what they could themselves. All the ready cash that came to hand he put back at once into the house, in order to fit up temporary quarters in the basement—for by this time the old parsonage had deteriorated to the point of becoming uninhabitable. The Pastor's salary always lagged so much behind the inflation, however, that he found it difficult just to keep his family fed.

By 1924 he finally managed to finish the three-story framework, and Helmuth lashed the traditional small fir to the roof-tree as they laid the tiles. Inside it was still like a barn. Nevertheless the basement though cramped was warm and dry.

With the introduction of the new Rentenmark that same year the period of deflation began. Money had value again. The only difficulty was that so few people had any. That summer Schoolmaster Himmer died. In his retirement he had lived on as a boarder in the house he had once owned, paying little attention to outside events, and contrary to everyone's advice leaving his money in the savings bank all during the inflation. As it turned out he was better off than his advisers, for according to the new law those who kept their money in the bank now received a ten per cent allowance in the new currency. This was enough to pay his funeral expenses and leave a moderate sum for his daughter to apply to the new house. The Pastor borrowed the rest of the money at six and a half per cent from the Bingen branch of the Dresdner Bank. His house, topheavy and out of proportion, was finished before the winter, but it had cost him two thousand marks more than he had expected, and his indebtedness was to be a burden for years. Even by 1931 there was still a quarter yet to pay.

Although he condemned miserliness and thought of himself merely as prudent, although as a matter of principle he always gave his tithe to the church, the Pastor tended to become increasingly penurious. All the small economies he could make, all the pfennigs he could set aside, went into the ugly bulk of the new house. Closeness became a habit. He demanded the last ounce from shopkeepers and workmen, complaining of the latter that their slowness did not justify the high wage rate. Even the peasants made jokes about him. Behind his back the carpenter would rub his thumb and forefinger together in the age-old Shylock gesture.

The year of the French evacuation of the Rhineland when the tricolor at last came down from Fortress Ehrenbreitstein, was also the

year of the Pastor's great sorrow. For that spring Notburg died suddenly in Berlin where she had gone to live with the von Schleichers and study singing. From a leggy schoolgirl with freckles and two braids of copper-red hair Notburg had grown to be a fine-featured almost stately young woman. Her voice never had quite the resonance necessary for a concert singer, but she thought it had and after she had finished with the music teacher at Boppard, with much reluctance on the Pastor's part she had gone on to Berlin. There walking in the Tiergarten on a gusty March afternoon she had caught a cold that rapidly turned to pneumonia. Five days later she was dead.

The Pastor would not let himself grieve. It was a weakness that he knew he must force from his mind. God's ways were not man's ways. If his religion was worth anything it was in such moments of trial. For if as the church taught and as he preached and believed, this life was only a prelude to a more transcendent and everlasting one, there was no cause for grief. Somewhere in the universe, in the vast stellar spaces or beyond, the radiance that was his Notburg still existed. At the end of his life's path he would find her again, whatever the rational arguments against it—in that he had faith.

Only, although he tried, there were those moments when he could not help remembering, as if all the brightness were in the past. Whenever he came out of his study the first things he saw were the upright piano with the two brass candle-brackets on either side of the music rack and the round upholstered piano stool. Notburg used to swing round on the stool when she heard his door open. As he sat at his desk he could hear her contralto voice. "Mein Schatz hat grün so gern . . ." Schubert's melody recalled was like a stab at his heart.

His anger—that was almost a relief—came when he saw Fanny grieve. "You are a clergyman's wife," he told her harshly the week after the funeral. "Everyone must bear these things, most of all ourselves. I cannot have you cry in front of people. You belittle my calling." After that she gave no sign. She went about the house and through the village, a silent grey-haired woman, withdrawn, wrapped in herself, as if no one could break through to her. In the period after the war the Pastor had come to have less and less physical need of his wife. After Notburg's death they never came together again. Although they continued to sleep in the same bed they were strangers to each other.

III

The brief years of prosperity that ended with 1929 brought few changes to Biebernheim. No cars yet dared the rutted cobbles of that steep main street where geese tried ineffectually to swim in the too-shallow puddles and dogs and children played with heedless safety. The shadow of the eighteenth century still clung to the red-tiled roofs huddled like a brood of chickens about the crossroads church with its onion-shaped tower. Only the stucco bulk of the new parsonage broke the harmony of this postcard scene. It loomed beyond the church, glaring and disproportionate, half-heartedly screened by a few walnut trees.

Tourists returned again to the Rhineland, but they rarely climbed beyond Ruin Rheinfels. Occasionally a sleek six-wheeled Mercedes with Berlin number plates would stop at St. Goar and the complacent passengers stare across the slate-green water to the Lorelei Rock before driving on to one of the Wiesbaden cure resorts. Brightly-colored barges chugged slowly up from the Netherlands to Basel, and in summer the excursion steamers from Cologne churned the current white against their paddle wheels. Passing the Lorelei the passengers sang Heine's familiar song, just as they had done in the years before the war. Sometimes on warm afternoons when the wind carried from the east one could hear the thin echo from the ledge a half mile beyond the village. This ledge, almost opposite the Lorelei and known as the Giant's Seat, overlooked the Rhine in two directions and was a favorite Sunday afternoon walk.

As for the political currents of the Weimar Republic they scarcely touched Biebernheim. The villagers were indifferent to the Pastor's Social Democratic about-turn, although they could not understand why he refused to wear his Iron Crosses on Remembrance Day. They themselves voted Nationalist, not from any special conviction but out of habit and because the old black-white-red colors were more familiar than the new mustard flag. When Hindenburg was elected President they were as pleased as the Pastor was fearful. But the latter's fears were not borne out. The wooden-faced Imperial Field Marshal was, it seemed, a man of honor. He had sworn his oath to the Republic and he was going to be true to it, disappointing as that might be to the Monarchists.

From time to time the Pastor came across a paragraph in the *Rheinische Post* about a Bavarian agitator named Hitler, one of the minor figures behind Ludendorff (now obviously insane) when he staged his Munich putsch. The chaotic postwar decade kept throwing up such ephemeral adventurers—like Ehrhardt and his brigade, Schlageter in the Ruhr, the ponderous Dr. Kapp, or Winter the "thousand-mark candidate" whose program was simply to redeem all the old thousand-mark notes of the Kaiser's time. Hitler was a blur, not so much a man as a vagary of the unstable Bavarian mind. Just now, with the help of proportional representation, his party of National Socialists as they called themselves, had managed to elect a dozen deputies to add one more splinter party to the confusions of the Reichstag. But the crest of his small wave had passed.

Some of the Monarchists had come to terms with the Republic. Baroness vom Rath's son was now a vice-consul in New York. She herself continued to live with her daughter Augusta and a third of their former number of servants in her castle on the outskirts of St. Goar. The castle was really a moderate-sized Victorian house masked by a series of sprouting turrets and iron furbelows and a square machicolated tower of yellow brick. By grace of this tower it bore the name "castle." The Baroness insisted on that. Each Christmas she continued to present the Pastor's wife with one of the pastel drawings for which she was noted. Most of her pictures were variations on one subject—an ivy-covered ruin at twilight, the Rhine in the background and crows flying over against a mauve and orange sky. Whenever the Baroness gave one of these away she expected to see it hanging on the wall, appropriately framed, the next time she called. The walls of the parsonage were heavy with them.

Augusta, Notburg's schoolmate and friend, also considered herself an artist, though outside her mother's crepuscular sphere which she ceased to admire at the age of fourteen. She had studied for several years in Munich and there under the influence of the Society for Liturgical Arts became interested in the revival of the technique of mural painting. It was the beginning of that vogue for painting shadowless murals in public buildings using the local inhabitants as models. When the question of a war memorial for the Biebernheim church came up, as it inevitably did, Augusta suggested that a mural would be appropriate. The Pastor, thinking of her mother's pastels, was a little dubious.

"We could make it symbolic of peace," Augusta told him. "No kitsch, just ordinary people. The Biebernheimers will like to see themselves. You wait and see!"

"Well," he said, stroking his beard, "make a sketch. The bishop will have to approve of it in any case, you know. And remember—nothing heroic!"

Augusta started work on her murals only a month before Notburg's death. Fifty years before some artisan had carved an Iron Cross over the door of the sacristy with under it the name of the solitary villager who had fallen in the Franco-Prussian War. Augusta chose the blank rectangle on the south wall between the windows to letter the names of the Biebernheimers who had fallen in the World War. Twenty-eight of them there were. Next to this list, in unrelieved flat colors, she painted a Resurrection. Her Resurrection was a battlefield with soldiers rising from their trench-graves. There were three central figures: a German in a steel helmet who clasped the hand of a Negro poilu as they both emerged from the earth, and beside these two reaching out to them in brotherhood a British tommy. Underneath were the words of John in gold leaf: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death." The poilu was the least successful of the three, Augusta having no Negro model. On the opposite north wall there was only one window and in this larger rectangle Augusta had planned her allegory: "Come unto Me all ye that travail."

"No," said the Pastor when she showed him the sketch. "I want that wall left blank—as a reminder of the next war. We lost one man in 1870, and twenty-eight the last time. They'll need twice as much space for names if there is another. Let them think about it!"

So Augusta painted her allegory in the sacristy that was also used as a Sunday school. But before she finished it Notburg was dead. As a prelude she sketched a girl on either side of the doorway. The one on the left, representing virtue, wore a dirndl and had braided yellow hair and a sheaf of wheat in her arms. The girl on the right was a flapper of the '20's in a tight red dress that scarcely covered her knees, cropped hair and painted lips. She represented temptation. Covering the rear wall was Augusta's allegory. Christ on the mount held out his arms to the crowd of villagers, recognizable faces all—the carpenter, the proprietor of the Lindenhof, the schoolmaster, old

Pabst who had lost three sons in the war, young Pabst, the Pastor himself standing in the front row, and among the Biebernheim women in the rear the lost Notburg with her red-gold hair.

Sometimes at the end of the afternoon the Pastor would take the back path through the vegetable garden to the church. The quietness of that snug interior had always given him a renewed feeling of strength. He would stand in the aisle and bow his head in prayer, then raise his eyes to the plain altar behind which was a small oval window with a fragment of red and yellow medieval glass. Tradition had it that shipwrights had helped in the building of the church, and the Pastor believed it might be true, for the beams and the balcony and the pulpit with its carvings were the work of master joiners. There were traces of sixteenth century Adam and Eve paintings on the small panels of the pulpit seven steps above the congregation. He would stand there in the musty light watching the reflection of the red and yellow glass behind the altar and the seven steps he had climbed so many times and the encrusted Adam and Eve panels and the wall memorial with the three soldiers united in the comradeship of the Resurrection, his thoughts too vague to formulate.

Then suddenly he would turn and stride down the creaking aisle to the sacristy where stood the communion table with the plaster figure of Martin Luther and behind it the tableau of the mild white Christ extending his arms in benediction over the villagers, and at the far corner Notburg's grave loving features.

* * *

The depression spread. The Rhine seemed emptier, for the colored barges were rotting at their docks now in Strasburg and Rotterdam and Basel. More than a quarter of the men of Germany were out of work. In the elections of September 1931 the National Socialists won 6,500,000 votes, and from insignificance became the second largest party in the Reichstag. Even the world outside Germany was becoming aware of the brown shirted man with the drooping forelock and the lynx eyes and the compelling voice.

Now in the decay of the big cities there began the battle for the streets, and the Red Front Fighters who had been the first to use organized force found themselves faced with force as pitiless as their own. An American journalist wrote a book, *Deutschland—So? Oder*

So?, the cover illustrated with the alternate symbols of the hammer and sickle, and the swastika. It was in all the bookshop windows. Dr. Goebbels had moved on to the capital to reorganize the movement there and with his new paper *Der Angriff* to plan his assault on citadel "Red Berlin."

Even that backwater in the fold of the Rhine hills felt the stir. The blacksmith had organized a company of Storm Troopers who used to meet once a week in the upper room of the Lindenhof. Their voices rang out harshly against the quiet of the village night. Certain of the villagers were beginning to boycott the Sunday church services.

In Bingen the Pastor's cousin Heinrich Velthusen joined the National Socialist Party and now wore the enamelled swastika emblem flauntingly in his buttonhole. Before the war he had owned a fleet of barges which the French occupation authorities confiscated. After the inflation he tried his luck as a builder until construction in Germany came to a stop. Then following a year's struggle at odd and diminishing jobs he finally conquered enough of his pride to stand in line with the unemployed workmen of the town and take his weekly dole at the Arbeitsamt. The others in the queue looked at his bourgeois figure with contemptuous amusement. "Why," he told the Pastor savagely, "those are the men who used to work for me in the old days. And now I have to go and stand with them once a week for a few bread marks. That's what the world's come to!"

"So you've joined them," said the Pastor coldly, eyeing the party badge. "I must warn you now, Heinrich. Never do you appear on the street or anywhere else with me while you wear that unchristian emblem."

"You can do as you please," said his cousin belligerently. Then suddenly his voice became pleading. "Look," he said, "what else is there to do? Look, Paulchen, things can't get any worse with me. They can't get any worse. With a real leader at the wheel they could get better." The Pastor turned away.

Helmuth wrote from Berlin, where he was now an assistant engineer at the Borsig Electric Works, that orders were falling off so rapidly that the plant might soon be forced to close down. "What we'll do then," he added, "I don't know. As for the Nazis I can't see eye to eye with them. Their philosophy—if you can call it that— is naïve, their methods are brutal, and yet there is a vitality about them. One

can't deny it. In this period of decay they do represent a creative force, almost you might call it hope. Perhaps in the end they may evolve into a true movement of national resurgence. They have the university students pretty solidly behind them. One has to offer the young something—and who else does?" The Pastor sat for a long time at his desk with his eyes half-closed. Yes, he thought sadly, those people did offer the young something. But that something was death.

* * *

The Pastor never remembered an autumn as beautiful as that of 1931. Summer lingered on into September, the lazy sun-moted afternoons when he and Fanny and Herzeleid would have coffee in the garden at the table under the walnut tree, with the air full of gossamer threads and yellow-striped wasps hovering above the jam pot. The Pastor would always put a dab of jam at the side of his butter plate for the wasps. Herzeleid was afraid of them. She, the quiet one, had Notburg's hair but nothing more. For she was a Velthusen woman, stamped an old maid by the time she was fifteen and now at nineteen with no other purpose in life but to stay on and help at home. Her face was gentle, her neck scrawny and her chapped fingers scored with the marks of paring knives like those of a peasant woman. No one ever seemed to know what she thought, least of all the Pastor.

The last Tuesday in the month the Social Democrats were holding a party day at Bacharach and the Pastor had been asked to speak. Since his Reichstag defeat he had taken less and less part in politics, and he was therefore surprised at the invitation, little realizing that it was because of his war record. But the Social Democrats were beginning at the eleventh hour to fight fire with fire, and the Iron Crosses they had once condemned they now sought out. They weren't going to let the Nazis garner them all.

That Tuesday was golden, another muted aftermath of summer. The Pastor when he saw the dew on the grass at breakfast decided he would rather walk than go by the Rhine steamer. Bacharach was only ten miles. If he had an early lunch he would take the upper path over the Rhine hills and be there by half past three. It wasn't every man of 68 who could take a ten-mile walk on an afternoon and then make a speech afterward, but the Pastor was proud of his fitness and he liked walking. His figure though stooped was still vigorous as he

strode along in his black frock coat swinging his walking stick, his small blue eyes a mild contrast to his grizzled beard.

At the Giant's Seat he stopped for a moment to look across the river and beyond the cliffs and vineyards to the wave after wave of rolling hills that melted into an indefinable blue distance—like a picture, he thought, by David Caspar Friedrich. The ferry boat from St. Goarshausen was just setting out across the river, its paddles foaming as the current swung its bow sharply downstream. The two lines of houses by the river bank made a white contrast to the variegated rectangle of vineyards behind them. Some of the vineyards were yellow, some brown, and a few still kept their summer greenness. Above the town, halfway up the hillside, loomed the old castle that had once belonged to the Counts of Katzenelnbogen. For over a hundred years it had been a ruin, until in this century it had been bought and restored by some wealthy New York German-Jews. They occupied it rarely, but always kept the old Imperial colors flying from the flagstaff. The Pastor could see the black-white-red flag hanging limply in the still air. Above it the jagged Lorelei cliff swam in sunshine. The peasants were finishing the potato harvest on the uplands and now far away into the distance the smoke rose from the smoldering root fires straight and undeviating, the wispy ribbons coiling up from each bright central pinpoint of flame.

Far to the south an osprey soared without any movement of wing. Wagtails were bobbing and twittering in the wayside thickets matted with traveller's joy. The Pastor took the upper path. With the ripening of the grapes most of the paths through the lower vineyards had been barred—as if, he thought, people could not even be trusted with a bunch of grapes.

Underneath his feet the bronze leaves hissed. The sun felt warm against his coat. While he climbed he bent forward over his stick, but when he reached the crest of each reverse slope he straightened up and let his eyes wander again over the Rhineland landscape.

Steadily he kept on walking for over an hour and a half. The sun began its decline. Oberwesel, the portage town that had once been an Imperial city, now lay in miniature below him. As the path bent he could see the reddish church to his left and the round Oxen Tower like a chess rook and directly ahead of him along the cobbled path verged by vineyards the jagged ruins of Marshal Schomberg's castle.

Later when he approached Caub the sun was slanting across the fields. There in the lances of light that struck the river like a flame stood the Pfalz, the diminutive fortress in the middle of the Rhine topped by its swelling baroque tower and bristling with innumerable minor turrets. Like a stone ship, he used to tell Notburg when she was little, and she in turn would ask him how a stone ship could float.

Once beyond Caub he felt a weariness settling on him, a drag to his feet, an impatience with the path that followed the upland reaches into the shadow. Yet it would still be two miles or so to Bachrach. To forget himself and the weight of his legs he began to sing briskly:

Mit dem Pfeil und Bogen
Durch Gebirg und Tal . . .

The shadows stretched out to him. Suddenly the path turned downward by a wooden gate barring a vineyard where in a tangle of meadow grasses a single purple scabious still bloomed. The Pastor reached down to pick the belated blossom, then, impressed by its isolated pride drew back his hand. Until he stood up and raised his head he was unaware of Bacharach below him, but there it was. Beyond the gate and the solitary blossom the stark walls of the Werner Chapel raised their involuted tracery, rose-red in the levelling sunshine, in the infinite gesture of the Gothic. How many times the Pastor had seen that stone polygon he could not possibly remember, but each time he was filled again with the wonder of it. This was not contrived in stone, but sculptured space, this sandstone enchantment sprung like a transformation from its cruel medieval legend of ritual murder.

Far off the Pastor could hear the echo of a brass band from the party day, and he quickened his step in unconscious time to the music. As he drew near the rose-walled ruin and looked up at the lifting mass all penetrated by air and light it gave him the momentary illusion of having broken the boundaries of space. Through the long-shattered traceries he could see the flooding river expand north like an inland sea. The Rhine, this arching sky, the range of hills, the ruins above the white river towns and the cleft valleys—it was 43 years since he had come to know them. Over half his life had been spent here. What was left would find its fulfillment here. This was his country and his land.

Just before he reached the railway crossing, a gleaming black car

driven by a chauffeur and flying a white pennant with a black eagle on it pulled up beside him. The chauffeur touched his cap. At first he thought it was a mistake, but then through the glass of the rear window he saw the heavy face and gold-filled grin of the Social Democratic regional secretary, Prussian Ministerial Assistant Egger. The door of the car swung open.

"Ah, Comrade Pastor," said Egger expansively. "Hop in. Your train was late?"

"I walked," said the Pastor, "It was such a beautiful day."

"From Biebernheim? Incredible!" Egger rubbed his chunky hands, the knuckles fringed with sandy hairs. "I wish I could do it! You missed the parade though. They're laying the wreath now. We'll just drive up by the church. Sorry you didn't see our Reichsbanner, they looked splendid today. I tell you, Comrade Pastor, they're good boys, good boys. Since we've welded them into the Iron Front we're ready to show those Storm Troop hooligans a thing or two."

Ministerial Assistant Egger relaxed into the cushions and the roll of fat at his neck bulged over his collar. An old trade unionist turned politician he was known to his friends as the Rubber Man. This was not for his pliant bulk but because of his left arm which had been broken by a shrapnel fragment in the war. The bone had never knit and so he could bend the arm at right angles between the elbow and the shoulder, a trick he never failed to demonstrate on beer evenings. He wore his head shaved, and his air of well-fed being, his cigars, his stiff collar and soft hands, the bright pig eyes and the roll of fat at his neck gave the old Socialist the look of a caricature German capitalist. "The Iron Front," he kept declaiming on the way to the church, his hand confidentially on the Pastor's knee. "Have you seen our three arrows drawn through the swastikas? That was Minister Severing's idea. We'll blot 'em out before we get through!" As he leaned forward he belched comfortably and the Pastor caught the wine-sour odor of his breath.

There were massed red-black-gold flags in the square before the romanesque Templar Church marking a detachment of the Reichsbanner, the republican youth organization. The square was half-filled. As they drew up a policeman saluted and the spectators made way for the official eagle. "Yes," Egger went on, "when it comes to street fighting our Iron Front boys know how to take care of themselves."

A young workman in the olive-drab Reichsbanner uniform had just laid a wreath at the foot of the war memorial. He stood on the plinth a head above the crowd and just in line with the tasselled glockenspiel. They could hear his voice clearly in the car. His features were flat and simple, and one of his front teeth was missing. He spoke in the Rhineland dialect, hesitating between sentences, but with unmistakable earnestness. Egger relit his cigar.

"Dear comrades," said the boy, "we pledge you. Never again war! Nie wieder Krieg!" And as he repeated the phrase his plain face held an enduring quality of human dignity and human hope.

The moment he stepped down there was a distracting murmur from the crowd. Faces turned toward the hotel opposite. There two young men in brown shirts and jack boots had suddenly appeared on the second-story balcony and were staring down in defiant contempt at the assembled Reichsbanner. Then with scornful deliberateness they unfurled a large flag that they held between them. It unrolled over the balcony rail, blood-red in the afternoon with a white circle centered by the swastika. As it fluttered down, the crowd boiled over with shouts of Heil! and Pfui!

Egger puffed indifferently at his cigar. "Lumpen," he muttered, shrugging his shoulders. The Reichsbanner men broke ranks and pushed toward the flaunting flag. From around the corner of the hotel a squad of Storm Troopers came out to meet them. Now from the side streets the Pastor could hear a rising chant of hoarse voices. And for the first time he caught the words: "Juda verrecke! Down with Jewry!" The cry echoed through the square and up to the towers of the romanesque church, the old cry that had echoed through the narrow streets and Jew Alleys of medieval Bacharach six hundred years before.

* * *

At the end of each September Biebernheim had its harvest festival, the plum kirmes. Three days it lasted. The day before, each village housewife took her tray of plum tarts to the baker who had been up heating his long clay ovens with charcoal since two in the morning. No one could pass through Biebernheim that week without having tarts pressed on him from almost every doorway. After three days everyone had had enough of their blue-black cloying sweetness to last

for a year. Then, too, there were casks of beer broached at the Lindenhof for any man who would come and drink, and the carpenter and the smith and many of the peasants had their own private kegs. The girls wore their brightest dresses—no longer the traditional costumes that their mothers and grandmothers had worn—but as close to city styles as they could muster. The boys wore their Sunday suits, awkwardly and uncomfortably, and eyed the girls with oafish longing.

Early on the first morning roustabouts arrived from Hamburg and set up booths in the field beyond the parsonage. There they had a carousel and dart boards for chances and sweets for sale and a mechanical hurdy gurdy that night and day kept repeating its one song over and over, a wraith-like tune in a wistful minor key.

At the end of each kirmes, on that last afternoon when the booths had closed and the roustabouts were packing up, the boys of the village would drop out of sight. For half an hour there would be no sign of them, while the children and the girls waited. Suddenly they would reappear in a mass, rushing down the village street, four of them smirkingly self-conscious in the lead carrying a pole on which was suspended a straw-stuffed figure in men's clothes.

Then they would parade through the village behind the figure past the tittering girls and stopping finally in front of the Lindenhof. There while glasses of beer were passed round with echoing Prosits! one of the leaders would touch a match to the straw. They shouted happily as the figure blazed up. Burning the Old Man, they called it. It was something the boys of the village had always done as long as anyone could remember, and the straw sack with the canvas painted face dissolving in flame marked the ritual end of every plum kirmes. Beyond that no one knew or cared why they burned the Old Man. Only the Pastor knew how ancient this gesture was, that in the peasant boys' mutilated straw figure was enacted again the death of the god.

But the kirmes this year was not as other years. For the first time some of the young men did not join in burning the Old Man. They stood apart from the crowd, whispering among themselves in an isolated unity of their own and wearing swastikas in their buttonholes.

In the evening, under the flaring gasoline lamps, the men and girls crowded round the booths where the luminous tents edged their long shadows across the meadow grass. Once there was a brief scuffle

beyond the pin boards and, for an instant, the hurdy gurdy stopped and a man ran into the darkness. A girl screamed, there was the faint tinkle of broken glass, then the machine picked up its plaintive tune again.

On Saturday afternoons just before sunset each villager swept the street in front of his house with a besom as the final gesture towards the sabbath. In Biebernheim almost everyone still went to church. It was familiar, a reason for putting on one's best, a prelude to the main meal of the week, a chance for the young men in the balcony to look over the girls below. Yet this year gaps began to appear in the congregation. There were empty places in the curved balcony by the organ pipes. Some of the villagers had begun to avoid the Pastor. Young Pabst the baker, coming out of his shop and seeing the Pastor approaching turned abruptly and went back inside as if he had forgotten something. Even the elementary-schoolmaster who played the organ had become formal and distant.

The Sunday after the kirmes was a patchy overcast day with a high wind and rain squalls followed by moments of wan sunlight. The wind had stripped most of the leaves from the walnut tree and the yard below was stained brown. At quarter to eleven as the Pastor emerged from the side door in his Geneva gown for the Sunday service he found Herzeleid outside in a kitchen apron with a bucket of hot water beside her scrubbing away at a crude swastika that some one had daubed on the stucco wall during the night. It was only whitewash and came off easily.

"What is that?" he asked her sternly, stopping in his tracks.

"It's nothing," she told him looking up, her face reddening slightly. "Just some of those silly farm boys after their meeting."

He turned away and continued down the leaf-hidden path, past the rows of cabbage stalks and the faded beds of parsley and sage to the sacristy. A few pellets of rain struck his face but he was as oblivious of them as he was to the sullen sky through the branches of the walnut tree. He felt a tenseness just below his midriff that seemed to spread to all parts of his body, to his arms, to his legs, even to his forehead. The sign had come home to him. For the first time he felt himself old.

Almost half a century he had been a clergyman in Biebernheim. He had given his best there. And now the years had been climaxed

by this swirling emblem. The church bell began to ring. Passing through the garden he heard it without hearing. His shoulders sagged, the shoulders of an old man making his way uncertainly along a path of damp leaves in a Geneva gown that was too big for him. The world was still God's world, that he knew beyond knowing, but he himself did not have the strength to face it any more.

Black Rook in Rainy Weather

By Sylvia Plath

On the stiff twig up there
Hunches a wet black rook
Arranging and rearranging its feathers in the rain;
I do not expect a miracle
Or an accident

To set the sight on fire
In my eye; I seek
No more in the desultory weather some design,
But let spotted leaves fall as they fall,
Without ceremony, or portent.

Sylvia Plath is completing her second year on a Fulbright grant working for an English honors degree at Cambridge University. Her poetry has been published in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly* and other American magazines. Her husband is the British poet, Ted Hughes.

Although, I admit, I desire,
Occasionally, some backtalk
From the mute sky, I can't honestly complain:
A certain minor light may still
Leap incandescent

Out of kitchen table or chair
As if a celestial burning took
Possession of the most obtuse objects now and then—
Thus hallowing an interval
Otherwise inconsequent

By bestowing largess, honor,
One might say love. At any rate, I now walk
Wary (for it could happen
Even in this dull, ruinous landscape); skeptical,
Yet politic; ignorant

Of whatever angel may choose to flare
Suddenly at my elbow. I only know that a rook
Ordering its black feathers can so shine
As to seize my senses, haul
My eyelids up, and grant

A brief respite from fear
Of total neutrality. With luck,
Trekking stubborn through this season
Of fatigue, I shall
Patch together a content

Of sorts. Miracles occur,
If you care to call those spasmodic
Tricks of radiance miracles; the wait's begun again,
The long wait for the angel,
For that rare, random descent.

A STORY

The Wilderness

By CASHENDEN CASS

THE VILLAGE OF SHERBORNE GREEN had survived the years of war, in spite of its nearness to London; no worse damage had occurred than when, in the early larking days of 1941, a bouquet of small bombs was scattered among the winter fields of turnip and kale by a harried enemy making fast for home. It was the following sway of peace that destroyed the village. Then twelve miles reached out like an arm from the city and scooped into its orbit the fields and meadows that wilted and were covered by the white sheet of concrete. Sherborne Green became a closely housed community whose members were well set upwards on the social grade. Remnants of the village were left around the housing estate, where an order to demolish had been delayed, and where scraps of meadow had been reprieved to perpetuate some rural atmosphere, and most of all where a long-neglected canal, banked and supported by boggy fields, shabbily dragged its course against the advancing order of the estate. Although this area had, on the architect's plan, been trimmed to colored units of house and garden, it was still undeveloped and was a nuisance to the contractor and to the new population already forming its east and west ends of geographical tone. In the days of the village, people had referred to this underdeveloped area as the old wilderness, but it had no history. No one even then had seemed to care much for the place, except a gang of children who had been warned, by their instinctive parents, against going there; for some of the bogs were rumored to be bottomless. The wilderness almost acquired one tragedy when a young girl disappeared after Sunday school, and was lost, feared drowned in bog or canal. The lesson

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that afternoon had been the story of John the Baptist. The girl returned next day, carrying a large damp cat, and telling a confused and unsatisfactory story of having gone into the wilderness to live like the loin-clothed man, then there was this cat in the canal which must have fallen from a barge, and she pulled it out of the water, and there was no milk or honey in their wilderness.

* * *

As the village people moved away to the country town where a lower-income housing estate had newly been attached—an austere project where slabs of small houses were squeezed into strips of garden, and the walls of bedrooms thinly defined a proximity of neighbors—the girl who had played at John the Baptist became the only village child left at Sherborne Green. She watched the new generation of the new middling class move in, bringing with it a few very clean babies but no children old enough to be her companions. The summer that year was a rare season among English summers, when the sun visited the sky, there so often grumbling with clouds, and stayed each day, and seemed it would never leave. The girl roamed through the wilderness alone looking for adventures which could never be found in solitude; sometimes the cat went with her and stayed mostly to sit, unmoving, on the canal bank, watching the world of weeds and small brown fish go by, while the girl prodded restlessly at its depths. At first when the cat returned to the canal-side, the girl had thought it was looking for the boat that had been his home, and she had called once to a passing barge. A man and a woman leaned against the carnival end of the barge, a dark and silent pair, who, as the girl called pointing to the cat, stared unalteringly at some private distance, and it seemed to the girl that they imposed a foreign place upon the wilderness as they passed, and she was not there.

So half the summer was squandered with nothing to show for it. No discoveries, no encounters. Not even a dead dog, blown up and adrift in the malingering brown canal now discarded like a piece of machinery, obsolete, and left outside to rust. There was a sense of time passing, the beautiful summer dissolving, all unshared. One day the girl left the wilderness to walk through the roads of the estate. The pavements were edged with grass that looked as if it had been unrolled by the yard and tacked into position, and sometimes she recog-

nized a tree once a wild beauty of the fields, now penned by a white fence and groomed fit for the suburb. Each house she studied carefully as she had done many times, pausing to note the differences in design the architect had planned to satisfy the inhabitants that no two houses should be quite alike. Most of the houses had shutters. Some of the shutters had hearts cut out, or clubs, or diamonds or spades, and they were fixed on the walls so that they would neither open nor shut, and in any case would not have covered more than a quarter of the window space, but socially they were enviable.

"They are very pretty," thought the girl, "the clubs especially. But those front doors don't look strong. You couldn't settle an argument with a really good slam, the way Pa does in our house, though it's been falling down for years. Those doors would just rattle." She squatted on the grass edge to watch tar oozing in the heat from between the concrete blocks of the road, and, as she flattened the swelling bumps with her foot, a Pekinese dog came from one of the gardens, trailing its tufted fur in the dust.

"I suppose your name is Ming," she said kindly to the dog. A medallion tinkled on its collar and she leaned towards it to read the name inscribed there. At this moment the dog snapped, bared its teeth, and was shaken by the violence of its own shrill bark. The girl, who feared emotional display, tried to calm the dog, but the din brought out the woman of the house, a woman in enraged pursuit of her possessions. She snatched up the dog, consoling it loudly, while from its crumpled mouth saliva dripped frothily onto her skirt. Then, in the strongest terms permitted on showing annoyance in public, she abused the girl for teasing her dog. The girl listened, but even injustice could not dislodge her from the cavern of her solitude, and she wandered along the road thinking: "I don't care, I just don't seem to care."

The woman called out after the rudeness of the retreating back: "Don't ever come playing outside my house again."

The girl flat-footed it along the gray slabbed paving stones. "Play? There's no one to play with. You can't play with a Pekinese."

* * *

At the end of the road were the newest houses. Outside one was a removal van. The girl, with lifting hope, ran to watch the procession of furniture moving into the house. The objects, sackclothed and

stringed, looked ungainly in the hands of the workmen who, with the air of getting rid of good riddance, unloaded them and bumped them off into the new house. But to the eyes of the girl who had studied many entrances made on the estate, this collection held distinction. There was a number of packing cases enormously labelled "China with Care," and the furniture glimpsed beneath its coverings showed an elegance fawning upon some entirely feminine taste. The girl played a brief game of pretending that the beautiful mistress of the home would invite her to a dainty tea taken with dainty manners among the treasure of the packing cases; but the pretence was too much of a pain because it was so much of a desire.

Within a week the girl had surveyed the occupants of the newest house and made a skirmishing contact. Their name was Scott. There was one child, a boy, of about her age, named Vernon. There were no animals. His mother was perhaps not beautiful but this did not matter because of her thinness and dignity. Her bearing firmly asserted a sinecure of delicacy which she suffered with such grace that her family were glad to share, respectfully, in the mystique of her poor health. The girl was entranced at the woman's pallor and the sharply curved cheekbones of her neat face. The boy's father was handsome and darkly stern. Vernon, at first acquaintance, was disappointing, on account of his resemblance, unfortunate in a boy, to his mother. His legs were thin as twigs and were as easily breakable.

"You're not as wide as I am," said the girl, "And awfully thin. Let's see your arms."

"They're thin too," Vernon said, pushing up the sleeves of a cardigan worn against the danger of catching cold in August. "You see, I'm delicate."

"Boys can't be delicate. They can be ill and die of something but they can't be delicate. That's silly."

"Mother says I am, like her." His complacency shifted a little before the opposition to this idea, but the authority of his mother was enough for the girl to make terms.

"Well if you are then, I'm sorry. I dare say you'll grow later. Maybe you'll even grow up to be like your father, or nearly."

* * *

nized a tree once a wild beauty of the fields, now penned by a white fence and groomed fit for the suburb. Each house she studied carefully as she had done many times, pausing to note the differences in design the architect had planned to satisfy the inhabitants that no two houses should be quite alike. Most of the houses had shutters. Some of the shutters had hearts cut out, or clubs, or diamonds or spades, and they were fixed on the walls so that they would neither open nor shut, and in any case would not have covered more than a quarter of the window space, but socially they were enviable.

"They are very pretty," thought the girl, "the clubs especially. But those front doors don't look strong. You couldn't settle an argument with a really good slam, the way Pa does in our house, though it's been falling down for years. Those doors would just rattle." She squatted on the grass edge to watch tar oozing in the heat from between the concrete blocks of the road, and, as she flattened the swelling bumps with her foot, a Pekinese dog came from one of the gardens, trailing its tufted fur in the dust.

"I suppose your name is Ming," she said kindly to the dog. A medallion tinkled on its collar and she leaned towards it to read the name inscribed there. At this moment the dog snapped, bared its teeth, and was shaken by the violence of its own shrill bark. The girl, who feared emotional display, tried to calm the dog, but the din brought out the woman of the house, a woman in enraged pursuit of her possessions. She snatched up the dog, consoling it loudly, while from its crumpled mouth saliva dripped frothily onto her skirt. Then, in the strongest terms permitted on showing annoyance in public, she abused the girl for teasing her dog. The girl listened, but even injustice could not dislodge her from the cavern of her solitude, and she wandered along the road thinking: "I don't care, I just don't seem to care."

The woman called out after the rudeness of the retreating back: "Don't ever come playing outside my house again."

The girl flat-footed it along the gray slabbed paving stones. "Play? There's no one to play with. You can't play with a Pekinese."

* * *

At the end of the road were the newest houses. Outside one was a removal van. The girl, with lifting hope, ran to watch the procession of furniture moving into the house. The objects, sackclothed and

stringed, looked ungainly in the hands of the workmen who, with the air of getting rid of good riddance, unloaded them and bumped them off into the new house. But to the eyes of the girl who had studied many entrances made on the estate, this collection held distinction. There was a number of packing cases enormously labelled "China with Care," and the furniture glimpsed beneath its coverings showed an elegance fawning upon some entirely feminine taste. The girl played a brief game of pretending that the beautiful mistress of the home would invite her to a dainty tea taken with dainty manners among the treasure of the packing cases; but the pretence was too much of a pain because it was so much of a desire.

Within a week the girl had surveyed the occupants of the newest house and made a skirmishing contact. Their name was Scott. There was one child, a boy, of about her age, named Vernon. There were no animals. His mother was perhaps not beautiful but this did not matter because of her thinness and dignity. Her bearing firmly asserted a sinecure of delicacy which she suffered with such grace that her family were glad to share, respectfully, in the mystique of her poor health. The girl was entranced at the woman's pallor and the sharply curved cheekbones of her neat face. The boy's father was handsome and darkly stern. Vernon, at first acquaintance, was disappointing, on account of his resemblance, unfortunate in a boy, to his mother. His legs were thin as twigs and were as easily breakable.

"You're not as wide as I am," said the girl, "And awfully thin. Let's see your arms."

"They're thin too," Vernon said, pushing up the sleeves of a cardigan worn against the danger of catching cold in August. "You see, I'm delicate."

"Boys can't be delicate. They can be ill and die of something but they can't be delicate. That's silly."

"Mother says I am, like her." His complacency shifted a little before the opposition to this idea, but the authority of his mother was enough for the girl to make terms.

"Well if you are then, I'm sorry. I dare say you'll grow later. Maybe you'll even grow up to be like your father, or nearly."

* * *

It became the regular plan for them to meet every morning and to go to the wilderness to play. The boy did not care much for the wilderness games which involved tree climbing and throwing of stones and leaping over bogs, and sometimes he wished he had stayed at home to enjoy the safer gambits of his mechanical toys; yet the girl, for all her roughness, touched him with an enthusiasm that rarely penetrated the pattern of good behavior that lay heavily upon his home, and this caused him to buck at his mother's repetitive: "Do you really want to go to play with that girl?"

* * *

One morning they trailed their way through the drought-toughened grass, arguing fitfully as to what they should do, until they reached a hollow in the canal bank that was the submerged and secret cockpit of the wilderness. The boy fidgeted to feel the ground before he sat down to know if it was damp still from the lingering dew of the early hours. He remembered, irritably, how he disliked girls and how they made him feel they were forever nibbling away at his safe being. To the girl watching him, also irritated, by his fussiness, occurred a moment's recollection of the old days of the gang. This boy would never have won his place. She tried to feel contempt, but the feeling was more like envy. The gang would have seen only a "sissy," and there was nothing worse, but in his slight frame and thin face she saw other things that they had not, and she could not share.

"Have you always lived in the town? My father says the air in the town is full of germs." It was so rarely that her father said anything that his brief and bitter intrusions upon the silence of her home were each remembered by her with awe, for her father was a stranger whose presence there she had never questioned.

"Sounds as if your father has never been in a town. What happened to all those brothers you were bragging about?"

"They went away and got married."

"They couldn't all be old enough to get married and be your brothers with you only your age. That's very odd."

This had been the comment following the girl's conception, her birth, and at intervals, her life. Her father had shrugged off her existence as one of those visitations of God, for which, considering the age of his wife, he could not be blamed, though his wife continued to

pleasure him, herself unperturbed if somewhat wearied by this aftermath conception.

"You can see London from the top of that tree." She did not want to talk of her family to Vernon, only wanted to hear of his.

Vernon looked at the tree and then at the girl's legs, the brown skin marked with red summer scratches and the white scars of an earlier season. He realized that he might be forced into climbing the high steeple of the tree, and he felt his mother's dislike of the girl.

"We could swim," she said.

"In that water! Besides I haven't a costume."

She said quietly, "I wouldn't look, and it's not really dirty once you're in. It's just the color. When the others were here we often swam and no one bothered about costumes."

"Well I think it's disgusting!" Everything about the girl seemed suddenly to annoy him, and then suddenly no longer did, and he wished he knew how to swim. She liked this offense of his shyness, for sometimes with the hardened group of her previous friends she had felt an unwilling shame as the boys mocked their for-the-time-being unprivated limbs, derisively sure and free of themselves, as if never would they be caught in a net of conscience to flap in the idle space of reproach. They let their lives lead themselves and what they did not know they did not bother with a thought.

"A fish! I saw a fish." Vernon turned to her and she smiled at his excitement, then crawled away in pretended danger to a foxhole.

"Where are you going? Didn't you see my fish?"

She uncovered two string shopping bags attached to canes, and a jam jar. "We are surrounded by the enemy. We'll have to fish to eat."

Vernon laughed at her but the game was on.

That day Vernon went home with two minnows alive in a jam jar. On a confused impulse he offered them to his mother who was resting on the sofa. She said, "Oh my dear, really!" and closed her eyes for she was feeling especially delicate just then.

* * *

The friendship with Vernon did not progress as intimately as the girl had hoped. He hardly ever allowed her to call for him at the house, thus excluding her from the spectacle of the lounging furniture and the lounging woman residing there. He had been trained to sense

what was compatible with his mother's possessions and he knew that in her house the girl would make an absurd intruder. He also felt as if he had always known that social behavior may be relaxed during times of holiday—especially summer holidays, which were normally taken away from home—and it had been hinted that when he began his new school in the autumn, his summertime companion would properly vanish. This was not for him at the moment to consider. He was, meanwhile, glad to meet the girl at the canal-side, always careful not to be won irretrievably far by the eagerness with which she patiently flattered him. Because she desired their association more than he, there was quickly established his superiority, not at all upheld by their games, but this was something neither wished to define, for it was beyond their shared territory, and belonged in the difficult outside world of his parents' house. At first Vernon resented the rawness of her curiosity about his life at home but as she learnt to question with the soothing inference of an audition at which he could not fail, he began to talk confidently, even without listening to himself, so that he did not notice, for instance, how often he spoke of his father, whom he did not much like, in a manner excited a little by the girl's applause.

"He's awfully good at reading things, with voices he makes quite different. You should hear him."

"I'd love to."

Vernon changed the subject.

Gradually as the days passed, Vernon lessened the distance between his companion and himself. His loyalty to the whisper of his mother's disapproval lapsed in the girl's presence, for she was not always rowdy and making danger. She showed him how to build a shelter, roofing it with dried grass, where they could lie eavesdropping on furtive birds. He had thought birds in London to be brown unless they were pigeons. Now he saw the flower-blue wing of the shrieking jay, and the pink puffs of the bullfinches, and little birds bright as canaries. One day they saw a creature that was a dragon among birds, a flurry of freckled color, a long tail twitching.

"What is it, what is it?" asked Vernon, "That most beautiful thing."

"Pheasant. From the old days when there was a manor and a park. They had shoots. A wise old bird that one."

"I must must have it."
"No. Let it alone."

* * *

Towards the end of August it was Vernon's birthday, and for that day it had been suggested by his father that Vernon should invite his friend to tea. Mr. Scott was headmaster at the County town's grammar school. He was respected, almost liked, by pupils, parents, and governing committee, and he was quite unable to come to livable terms with his son. From this failure his wife derived some condolence for her own failed partnership with her husband; it had happened in the young days of their marriage, when the shyness and the fear and the first gentleness had been discarded, they were revealed as not what each had supposed the other to be. He a thirsty and hard riding traveller who reaches an oasis to find it is real but unbelievably there is no water to drink. His wife blamed him for their shared delusion and at the first outrage had chopped hastily at his conceit, protest guiding her blows. Then she spotted the gap of unsureness, where he faltered, and she made him regard the space beneath, and only reckless honesty could have saved him. But he looked away to the sight of what he wished to appear to be and took the illusion of support she then offered, and resumed his progress, his stature added to by some slight falseness that in no way obstructed his chosen career. His expression became grave, which distinguished his handsome features so that there was about him an air of understatement—his private agonies were as icebergs, conspicuous, perhaps dangerous, yet for the most part decently submerged.

On the afternoon of the birthday tea he had been delayed, and the occasion had been taken over by Mrs. Scott to such a degree that it seemed the silence there would never again be interrupted. She had disapproved of the invitation given to the girl, regarding it as an example of her husband's deliberate eccentricity of taste which he sometimes, without motive, enjoyed, (and which, she knew, was sometimes permissible to headmasters). He had liked the look this girl had of being warmed by the sun, and the animal brightness of her eyes, watchful and much too inquisitive. He defended her "earthy" qualities (by these he meant her rather fierce energy and the fact that her father had been a farm laborer), saying that their boy could do with a little

toughening up especially with a new boarding school waiting for him in the autumn. Mrs. Scott bored herself at the tea party by playing with emphasis on the girl's unsuitability. It was a rapid social victory from which the girl slightly detracted by being unaware of the event, but Vernon was angered and took the insult for himself. He refused to cut the birthday cake. With its iced pink twirls and sugary "Best Wishes" scrawled across its frothy surface it began to look like a novelty practical joke. The girl could only think, "How beautiful everything here is," and sweat out her fearful silence. As Mrs. Scott rose and was about to retire, dignifying her exit by mention of a threatening headache, her husband entered. The mothers of the pupils of Mr. Scott were charmed by what they called his "rare" smile, which he used with the trick economy of a clever actor. He used it now, almost forgetfully, being at home, then realizing that there was a situation in distress, he alarmed the silence with a ringing joviality so that at first the two children were startled to the point of horror, until his sustained performance turned the occasion into what they could recognize as an adult interpretation of a child's birthday treat. The headache settled on Mrs. Scott's head and she withdrew.

* * *

After the tea Mr. Scott offered to read them a story.

"Ask your friend, Vernon, if she has any preference."

"She hasn't read anything," said Vernon, still troubled by embarrassments that might yet come. But the headmaster gave the girl the beginning of his charming smile, and to him she said that she would like anything at all.

"It just so happens," said Mr. Scott, using the peculiar emphasis that made Vernon alert for an approaching joke, "that I've a Just So book for you here."

Vernon unwrapped the stories of Kipling bound in red leather, awkwardly thanked his father, and showed the book to the girl, gratified for the first time that day by the distraction of her presence.

She surprised him by showing much attention over it, until the moment of his awkwardness was forgotten and the three of them were looking through the book, and laughing and shouting out the bewilderment of titles, and quieting at the presurrealist madness of the author's illustrations.

"Look at this, Vernon, what's happening?"

The boy responded to his friend's jumping excitement as they stared at a drawing of a clock, a bearded man in a bath, a spotted orchid, all in a desert whose vastness was being covered by two zany animals hurtling to the empty distance.

* * *

Mr. Scott read aloud well. He enjoyed it. It freed him from the limiting part of stern though just headmaster. It permitted him to indulge in the exhibition of comedy and pathos. He lived his parts. Vernon, satisfied that his father was behaving creditably, began to enjoy the obvious delight of the girl. He was pleased with her, and pleased with his father. He thought that if his father were someone else's, it would be much easier to like him. The evening suddenly flourished with a whirling gaiety that stormed imprisoned, unsuspected affinities, and these cut loose, mobbed and mocked the restraint of the drawing room. After the headmaster had read two or three stories, the children wanted to join in, so they chose parts and acted the next story together, and dazzled by their own virtuosity were elated by the knowledge that they had struck a shared and boundless happiness. Story after story they played out, as, in a few words, the drawing room would, wonderfully, become a fantasy of desert, jungle, mountains and mystery. Yellow Dog Dingo cleared the frilled sofa of the Australian bush in a hurdling leap, and the gate-legged table, its high polish glassy as a pool, was where the elephant found his trunk; but they could have played as well in a bare yard, for the only furnishings they could see were of the author's rampaging invention; they were touched by his magic, became his creatures, exploring with violent hilarity his imaged continents. At last, though, time reinstated the drawing room. They begged for one more story, then squabbled, hardening with the desperate need for its choice.

"This one about the cat, you said we could before." Vernon had asked for it earlier, but the girl had objected saying that it was sure to be too sad with a title like that. There was a picture of the small animal walking down a white and desolate corridor of trees, and there was something about it that troubled her. Their argument grew loud and uncorrelated so that they were merely shouting imperatives while the headmaster murmured words of compromise which they did not

hear. Then Vernon flung a cushion at the girl, and reverting to laughter began to turn the light chairs upside down.

"Come on, we can make a beautiful cave." He walled the chairs in with cushions and although his head was bent over the cave and he was talking wild nonsense as he worked, and he did not hear the door open, he felt their new world vanish and found himself foolishly havocing the chairs and cushions of his mother's beautiful drawing room.

Mrs. Scott held herself in the doorway. She was a woman who could, if an entrance demanded it, appear very tall. She rarely used her height, preferring a sloping, diminutive effect, but now standing, her head held bravely high, she squared her thin shoulders as she faced the wreckage of her drawing room's atmosphere. Slowly she looked at the three now isolated figures; and she looked steadily across at them until her silence had been asserted, leaving them with their extraordinary behavior as difficult to explain as the heap of chairs and cushions in the middle of the parquet floor. The girl, afraid for the world of their wonderfully shared explorations, tried to save it with a last cry of allegiance.

"We were just going to have the story about the cat."

Her companions looked at her and then looked distantly away. There were murmurings and explanations and apologies for noise, mostly there was the plaintive expression in Mrs. Scott's eyes, hiding the small arrogance of a head that ached instead of a heart, the arrogance she had once more to re-assert.

"Please be so kind as to see that girl leaves the house immediately."

Mr. Scott stopped his tidying of the scrummaged room. A moment raised itself in his memory of when her narrow body lay beside him, on a harem of cushions, in a green garden, and he had read from a book of sonnets, and she, he thought, had listened.

"Vernon, it is long past your bedtime. Come, I will take you upstairs." She looked once more at the girl, then claiming her son with her hand, withdrew.

* * *

The next day, and for the rest of the outstaying vacation, the girl walked along the white street that was a corridor of closed houses, walked to the wilderness by herself. The swarm of summer moments,

humming with happiness, gathered round her and moved away to some far distance. Then her ears were shells, throbbing and burning with an echo that hurt. At the canal-side she sat staring into the unreflecting water. And now the wilderness was an unused building space and the water was a dirty and derelict canal.

The City

By HELEN SUE ISELY

Scooch. Spatter. Crunch. Mungle.
Feet belonging to strangers enter the subway.
Werrum. Crang. Skeel. Tong.
Buses spill strangers into wide-mouthed curbs.
Ribb. Scudd. "Taxi?" "Taxi?"
Strangers speak with self-winding mouths:
"Pardon." "Let me through, please." "O.K." "My stop."
Expressionless eyes scrape the surface of your iris.
High-heeled strangers. Perfumed strangers.
Elbowing strangers. "My car" strangers.
Noises. Scrapings. Staring eye.
Hats perched on strange strangers.

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The Anguish of Nothingness in Modern Philosophy

By ROBERT G. OLSON

> A time will come when this Universe and Nature itself will be extinguished. And just as of the grandest kingdoms and empires of mankind and the marvellous things achieved therein, very famous in their own times, no vestige or memory remains today, so, in like manner, of the entire world and of the vicissitudes and calamities of all created things there will not remain a single trace, but a naked silence and a most profound stillness will fill the immensity of space. And so before ever it has been uttered or understood, this admirable and fearful secret of universal existence will be obliterated and lost.[1]
>
> —LEOPARDI

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER most of us have experienced a type of anguish which a number of contemporary philosophers have called "the anguish of nothingness," although it might just as well be named "the anguish of being." It is the feeling we have whenever the thought comes to us that nothingness was and still is just as possible as being, whenever we ask ourselves how it is that there is something rather than nothing. This sentiment should not be confused with the anguish of death, although the thought of death can and often does evoke it. The anguish of nothingness is properly the anguish which one experiences at the thought that nothing and nobody might ever have come into existence or that everything and everybody might go out of existence in an instant. When we try to conceive of the world being created out of nothing or being reduced to cosmic dust we are brought nearer to it. It has even been suggested that the peculiar liabil-

[1]Quoted in Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, pp. 123-24.

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ity of western man to the anguish of nothingness is a product of the traditional Hebraic-Christian belief in creation *ex nihilo*.

The anguish of nothingness inspires an eerie fear and dread but at the same time a sense of awe and exhilaration. It is a curious fact that one can not think of absolute nothingness without feeling the full wonder and mystery of being. Speaking metaphorically, one might say that it is only from the vantage point of nothingness that we can get a good look at being.

For persons who experience this sentiment regularly and with intensity anguish becomes not only a philosophical but also a practical problem, frequently one of life and death. The mere fact of being becomes a riddle and every attempt to solve it seems only to increase the perplexity. The concerns of daily living and the ordinary pleasures of life lose their interest and savor. The facts and theories of science appear trivial and the mind is unable to fasten upon them. The enigma of being casts an hypnotic spell and all else is sacrificed to it or drops to the level of dull routine.

Among the twentieth-century philosophers who have addressed themselves to the problem of anguish is Ludwig Wittgenstein. What he has to say about it is compressed into a few aphoristic sentences: "Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is. . . . We feel that even if *all possible* scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all. Of course there is then no question left, and just this is the answer. The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem." These remarks can be best understood within the perspective of a branch of positivism sometimes referred to as therapeutic positivism. The general outlook of the therapeutic positivists has been epigrammatically expressed by Herbert Feigl, who avers that "philosophy is the disease of which it should be the cure."[2] More literally, philosophy as traditionally practiced consists in asking illegitimate questions for which of course only illegitimate answers may be given, thus involving us in needless perplexity. Once we recognize the meaninglessness of the questions and understand their origin, they cease to agitate us. We are perplexed by them only because they seem to be answerable. Once we recognize that they are unanswerable, we shall cease to pose them. "The riddle does not

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[2]Herbert Feigl, "Logical Empiricism," in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, edited by Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars, p. 6.

exist. . . . For doubt can only exist where there is a question; a question only where there is an answer. . . ."[3]

The question "What is nothingness?" for instance, is grammatically similar to the question "What is man?" and we are thus led to assume that it is equally meaningful. Although we may not now have a satisfactory answer to either question, we feel that a satisfactory answer might be given to both. Upon reflection, however, we discover that whereas we can at least conceive of the type of answer with respect to the question "What is man?" which would satisfy us, this is not the case with respect to the question "What is nothingness?" The latter question is strictly meaningless; our mistake is the logical one of assuming the meaningfulness of an interrogative sentence on the wholly inadequate grounds that it is in correct grammatical form.

The solution which Wittgenstein proposed to the problem of anguish is not a very happy one; and it is doubtful whether anyone who has ever experienced a strong dose of anguish will find much solace in it. No one who has seriously posed ultimate questions about being will dispute the difficulty of putting them sharply. But until the criterion of meaningfulness is itself made clear—most positivists admit that they have not yet succeeded in doing so—it is premature to outlaw speculation of this character. Moreover, even if *the questions* which those who experience the crisis of anguish tend to raise were in fact meaningless and were recognized as such, it would not necessarily follow that *the experience* of anguish itself must disappear. The positivists' claim that men will be cured of anguish if only they recognize the meaninglessness of the questions which this experience suggests rests upon a highly dubious psychological assumption. It is entirely possible that man is a being who finds himself compelled to ask unanswerable questions. There is perhaps symbolic significance in the fact that Wittgenstein abandoned his doctrine in his later years. His therapy did not take, and there is good reason to believe that he was hounded until his death by the fear of crossing the border of mental illness.[4]

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[3]Both quotations from Wittgenstein are taken from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 187.

[4]See Georg Henrik von Wright, "Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Biographical Sketch," *Philosophical Review*, October, 1955.

William James is another modern philosopher who has grappled with the problem of anguish. James referred to the anguish of nothingness variously as "metaphysical wonder," "ontological wonder sickness," and "cosmic fear." He states that it is precisely at the moment when a man feels he has explained all natural phenomena

> that the craving for further explanation, the ontological wonder sickness, arises in its extremest form. As Schopenhauer says, "The uneasiness which keeps the never resting clock of metaphysics in motion is the consciousness that the nonexistence of this world is just as possible as its existence." The notion of nonentity may thus be called the parent of the philosophic craving in its subtlest and profoundest sense. Absolute existence is absolute mystery, for its relation with the nothing remains unmediated to our understanding.

For James, however, anguish is merely an "incidental feature" of our mental life which we must shake off if we can. "The bottom of being is left logically opaque to us as something which we simply come upon and find, and about which (if we wish to act) we should pause and wonder as little as possible." Even if the philosopher can not "exorcize this question, he must ignore or blink it, and assuming the data of his system as something given, and the gift as ultimate, simply proceed to a life of contemplation or action based upon it."[5]

James's interpretation of anguish sounds eminently sane and appeals by virtue of its simplicity. There can be no question at least that it is the most congenial to the temper of contemporary American society. We naturalistically-minded Americans are quite generally convinced that the most worthy ideal for man is harmonious adjustment to the natural and social world, that intelligence and moral courage are the most satisfactory means to the attainment of this goal, and that the matter-of-fact assumption of an active and responsible role in our natural and social environment is the best solution to our personal ills. Such is the essence of the view which James developed in his well-known essay "Is Life Worth Living?" and it is in the light of this ethical orientation that his comments on anguish must be understood.

Perhaps, however, James's solution is not nearly so simple or so sane as it might at first sight appear. What if intelligence and moral effort are inadequate to insure adjustment? What if the environing

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[5]See William James, *The Will to Believe*, pp. 72-73; *Principles of Psychology*, II, p. 430; *Collected Essays and Reviews*, p. 128.

world stubbornly resists our efforts at adaptation? Would it not then follow that naturalism in offering no hope other than adjustment turns from a philosophy of sanity to a philosophy of despair? If adjustment fails, what can James recommend but resignation or stoic heroism? And on what grounds could one claim either moral or aesthetic superiority for stoic heroism over religious enthusiasm, defiant atheism or a simple howl of despair? The exiled Russian existentialist Léon Chestov put it well when he asked: "What other feelings can one entertain for the natural order and humanitarian sentiments than unqualified hate? Spencer taught adaptation—the moralists resignation. But this instruction is valuable only if one supposes that adaptation is still possible or that resignation can give us a certain relief. . . ."[6]

As Eric Fromm has clearly shown in his review of the evidence in *The Sane Society*, we Americans are despite our naturalistic orientation even more prone to withdraw from the world through alcoholism, mental illness, drug addiction and suicide than the less naturalistically oriented continental Europeans. Parents and educators have bent their total energies for some years past to teaching the young to adjust, and yet juvenile delinquency and other signs of psychic distress are on the increase. It is at least possible that there is a causal influence between the spiritual malaise of our society and its prevailing philosophy of adjustment. When adjustment becomes a moral ideal, maladjustment tends to become a moral vice. When adjustment and happiness are regarded as normal and healthy, maladjustment and suffering tend to be regarded as abnormal and pathological. Every failure and every frustration of natural and social aspirations becomes an occasion for self-condemnation and a source of guilt.

There is perhaps symbolic significance here, too, in the fact that the tender-minded James never quite lived up to his tough-minded ideal. Throughout his life he was subject to periods of depression and thoughts of suicide. He once claimed that no man was really educated unless he had toyed with the idea of suicide. "Crass supernaturalism," was a permanent personal temptation for him. He diagnosed his trouble as neurasthenia and complained of the sense of irreality and hollowness which accompanied him throughout life.[7] Is it because he

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[6]Léon Chestov, *La philosophie de la tragédie*, p. 88.

[7]See Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, especially II, pp. 207, 231.

lacked the intelligence or the moral courage that he was unable to "adjust to reality"? If so, what hope is there for the mass of men who can claim only a small share of his intelligence and moral energy? What hope is there even for those who can match James in intelligence and strength of character but whose destiny it is to live in a far more complex and frightening era?

The position of the contemporary existentialists is in sharp contrast to that of both the positivist Wittgenstein and the pragmatist James. "For myself," says the Spanish existentialist Miguel de Unamuno, "I can say that as a youth and even as a child, I remained unmoved when shown the most moving pictures of hell, for even then nothing appeared to me quite so horrible as nothingness itself." For Unamuno, as for all existentialists, however, the "remedy is to consider our mortal destiny without flinching, to fasten our gaze upon the gaze of the Sphinx, for it is thus that the malevolence of its spell is discharmed."[8] This solution, like that of James, requires interpretation in the light of the author's ethical orientation. For the existentialists anguish is a fundamental and inescapable fact of life. Kierkegaard called it "the sickness unto death." To flee from it is simply to transform it into a banal anxiety or a prosaic fear. Man must transcend the natural and social dimensions of his being through private suffering and anguish. If happiness is defined as the harmonious adjustment of man to man and of man to nature, then happiness holds no appeal to the deeper levels of the human personality and must in any case be rejected as a moral ideal. In the words of Chestov's compatriot and fellow existentialist, Nicholas Berdyaev:

> The ethics of the ancients, especially the classical ethics of Aristotle, considered man a being who seeks happiness, good and harmony, and who is capable of achieving this goal. Such is also the point of view of St. Thomas of Aquinas and of the official Catholic theology. But in fact Christianity has shaken this view. Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Dostoievsky are important witnesses to the fact. . . . Not the worst but the best of mankind suffer the most. The intensity with which suffering is felt may be considered an index of a man's depth. The more the intellect is developed and the soul refined . . . the more sensitive does one become to pain, not only the pains of the soul but physical pains as well.[9]

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[8]Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, p. 9.

[9]Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dialectique existentielle du divin et de l'humain*, pp. 95-97.

The appetite for being as manifested in anguish, not animal drives, is what keeps the wheels of life in motion. If the price is suffering, then suffer we must. It is not news that life is tragic, and perhaps it is best so. "Which would you find more appalling," asks Unamuno, "to feel such a pain as would deprive you of your senses on being pierced through with a white-hot iron, or to see yourself thus pierced through without feeling any pain? Have you never felt the horrible terror of feeling yourself incapable of suffering and tears? Suffering tells us that we exist. . . ."[10]

If the remedies of pragmatism and positivism are rejected, must we then accept the remedy of the existentialists? Their manner of posing the problem and the measures they recommend seem needlessly paradoxical and desperate. Perhaps, they have overreacted to naturalism. If anguish and suffering are not moral vices, need they therefore be religious virtues? According to Unamuno it is anguish and suffering which reveal God to us. Kierkegaard believed that those who have suffered and are cut off from society, as he was, are the naturally religious ones. They are also the ones whom God chooses as his favorites. "What our age needs," said Kierkegaard in his *Journals*, "is education. And so this is what happened: God chose a man who also needed to be educated, and educated him *privatissisme* so that he might be able to teach others from his own experience." The overtones of spiritual pride are unmistakable, and one wonders whether there can be any good reason for assuming that God would make his saints and prophets suffer or choose those who suffer as his saints and prophets. The defense of anguish and suffering as religious values has never, so far as I know, been backed up by reasoned argument and seems most naturally explicable as a compensatory psychological device. There is evidence for this in an ambiguity of the existentialist position apparent in the texts already quoted. It is never altogether clear in existentialist literature whether man is a being who by nature prefers the tortured but sublime and glorious experience of anguish to natural happiness or whether anguish is a desperate remedy to a desperate situation, a leap in the dark away from an intolerable world. Obviously, however, one can not have it both ways. Moreover, no existentialist, however strongly he insists upon the aesthetic or religious

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[10]Miguel de Unamuno, *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

value of the experience of anguish, denies that the dominant affective component is one of pain. From this it is reasonable to conclude that the attempt to escape the natural and social dimensions of life is at least as self-defeating as the attempt to escape anguish. Further, in the absence of more positive considerations pointing in another direction the temporal priority of natural drives is presumptive evidence of their primacy in the scale of values.

In my own opinion the problem of anguish or, generalizing, the problem of suffering can best be dealt with on a psychological level within a naturalistic metaphysical perspective. The existentialists maintain that anguish and suffering would be most acute when men's natural drives and acquired desires were fully satisfied. Aldous Huxley illustrated this theme in *Brave New World* and even quoted Berdyaev to this effect on the frontispiece. There seems, however, to be no evidence whatsoever for such a statement unless the term "natural" is defined in an unduly narrow manner. James was probably right in diagnosing anguish as a product of frustration or physiological and nervous disequilibrium. He was also probably right in suggesting that it can often be relieved by an intelligent reorganization of desires and the skilful manipulation of the physical and social environment. It is, however, unduly optimistic to assume that intelligent and voluntary efforts are always of avail. There are millions of persons whose chances for natural happiness are practically nil, and there are times when life is too much for all of us. The existentialists have rendered an invaluable service in attacking the superficial optimism which leads to the neglect of such obvious cases and in putting the question anew at a profounder level. They also deserve credit for having seen that when the resources of intelligence and voluntary control have been exhausted, any attempt to relieve the pain by a stubborn and hopeless effort at adaptation will succeed only in reducing tragedy to bathos and turning the felt quality of experience into something mean, petty and crabbed. However, whereas the naturalists tend to deprive suffering of its dignity, the existentialists try to invest it with values it can never possess and bring ridicule upon themselves by their ardent claims of spiritual superiority. Anguish and suffering are not substitutes for well-being and happiness. They are permanent and unfortunate facts of human existence which can neither be transmuted nor ignored.

The error common to all three of the positions discussed here is the unwillingness to recognize that there is no remedy. And if I may be allowed a variation on the positivistic theme, perhaps the recognition that there is no remedy is, if not itself a remedy, a means to relief. At the very least the victim of anguish and suffering is entitled to a good conscience and human sympathy. But how can a man suffer with dignity if he believes that he is guilty of a simple logical blunder or if he takes his anguish and suffering as evidence that he is a weakling or a psychopath? And how can we sympathize with a man who uses his sufferings as an excuse for spiritual pride? Perhaps man will not fully achieve his humanity until he admits among his inalienable rights the right to be unhappy and to curse his fate.

Lazarus

By CAROLYN STOLOFF

I ran into Lazarus while skin-diving off the coast of Spain. He was lying with lobsters and foaming in his beard because he wanted to die and couldn't, believing in Jesus as he did. I felt real bad about it, of course, but what could I do? Besides I was running out of breath. I nodded my condolences and left. The last I saw of him he was still wringing his hands.

This is the second published poem by CAROLYN STOLOFF, who is more shy about showing her poetry than her painting. She has frequently exhibited her art in galleries and museums in New York City and elsewhere.

Edmund Burke and the American Liberal Tradition

By ARNOLD A. ROGOW

One of the most interesting features of the revival of conservative politics has been its impact upon the writing of history, and especially the history of American political thought. A generation ago it was fashionable scholarship to approach American history, and in particular the history of American conservatism, from a liberal or progressive point of view which placed great stress on the role of economic power in the American past. That is to say, a number of influential historians—the names of Beard, Parrington, and J. Allen Smith come to mind—were inclined to treat the major political conflicts of our history as battles in an eternal war between popular power and money power. It would be tedious to list the long series of books and articles that have stressed the decisive role of economic factors in their analyses of such movements and events as the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Democracy, the Civil War, and the development of constitutional law. It suffices to say that in almost every case the histories referred to were written from a point of view that regarded economic interests as causal and controlling.

The money power as such was labeled "conservative," and the money power and conservatism in general were broadly identified with the principles of the early Federalists and the more recent Republican Party. From this perspective the American conservative tradition reached from Hamilton to Hoover, and embraced, along the way, the contributions of Chancellor Kent, Webster, Calhoun, McKinley, Sumner, Carnegie, and Coolidge. Conservative principles, so defined, were

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the principles of rugged individualism, social Darwinism, states-rights, minimum government, and free private enterprise. The liberal historians also insisted that American conservatism was characterized by a profound distrust of democratic government and majority rule.

This view of our political and ideological history has recently been challenged by a number of writers who, in a fashion both analytical and exhortative, are attempting to re-locate the American conservative tradition. According to such historians as Peter Viereck, Russell Kirk, and Clinton Rossiter, among others, the conservative tradition in America is rooted not in the politics of business or its political expression, the Republican Party, but in the philosophy of the "Father of Conservatism," Edmund Burke. The historians referred to, who are themselves Burkean conservatives, argue that the conservative tradition has little or nothing to do with the concrete political and economic positions taken by leading conservatives of the past and present. Instead we are all asked to believe, and present-day conservatives in particular are requested to act upon, the historical truth that the conservative *Weltanschauung* consists of "proportion and measure; self-expression through self-restraint; preservation through reform; humanism and classical balance; a fruitful nostalgia for the permanent beneath the flux; and a fruitful obsession for unbroken historical continuity."

Professor Viereck's notion that these principles comprise the conservative tradition is undoubtedly "news" to many a conservative whose thinking has been confined to issues involving business regulation, labor laws, taxation, and tariff rates. Professor Viereck, of course, and other conservative historians are more concerned with an intellectual than with a political tradition, but it is a fair question whether conservative principles, or liberal principles for that matter, can be defined apart from *political* conservatism or liberalism. We do not, after all, search for communist principles solely in the writings of such communist intellectuals as Maxim Gorki or Vladimir Mayakowski—or even Karl Marx—but instead we roughly equate communist principles with the principles of the Politbureau.

It is also true that in proportion as one moves from the concrete to the abstract in politics one discovers a version of the "good" which can be made to appear reasonably attractive to all schools of thought and practice. At the higher levels of principle and doctrine all political philosophies have something in common and something to recom-

mend them. This explains, in part, why few avowed liberals would care to disassociate themselves from Professor Viereck's conservative faith, and it also explains why only a few avowed conservatives would want to reject several recent statements of the liberal tradition. Hence, too, the attraction earlier of communism and fascism to some liberals and conservatives. Only as one moves closer to the application of principles can one clearly distinguish the crucial differences between the ends sought and the means suggested by various philosophies, and even the differences between the philosophies themselves.

In other words, if the quest for the conservative tradition in America is to have any significance it must be conducted at the level of political and not intellectual history. To be sure, the search for the tradition at the political level raises problems which the historians of conservatism are inclined to avoid. If, for example, Edmund Burke is the "Father of Conservatism," how do we establish the legitimacy of the largely non-Burkean but conservative Republican Party? Conversely, if the conservative tradition be equated with the tradition of the G.O.P., where in past and present politics do we find the heirs and descendants of Burke?

The solution to these apparent conundrums of American political thought can be found if we delineate two distinct, and to a large extent contradictory, conservative traditions. The first of these traditions can be distilled out of the ideas and achievements of the Republican Party and influential individuals in and out of politics. It is, of course, a long tradition, and in its life span it has embraced such diverse but related doctrines as Hamilton's debt-funding scheme and support for manufactures, Calhoun's "concurrent majority," Webster's nationalism, the gospel of wealth and social Darwinism, and "normalcy." In general, the tradition has laid a heavy stress on property rights, and has steadfastly resisted attempts to regulate business, strengthen trade unions, distribute wealth, or otherwise impose "creeping" or lunging socialism upon the United States. On the whole, its acceptance of democratic and egalitarian advances has been reluctant and pessimistic from 1787 to the present, and for this reason it might well be called the tradition of endarkened conservatism.

The other conservative tradition has been articulated but rarely in the circles of avowed American conservatism. Holding with Burke that "a state without the means of some change is without the means

of its conservation," the tradition has urged moderation, tolerance, and limited reform throughout the history of American politics. In general, it has striven for balance between opposing factions, interests, and ideas, and has consistently sought the general good rather than simple class or majority advantage. Although it is by no means at one with Burkean philosophy, its own distinctive approach, from Jefferson through the two Roosevelts to Stevenson, has had a Burkean flavor, and thus the tradition can lay a much stronger claim to the legacy of Burke than can the rival conservative tradition. Sympathetic to democratic and egalitarian advances, and friendly to government intervention, the tradition has called itself, and has been regarded as, liberal. But its true character and role in American life has been as the tradition of enlightened and, to some extent, Burkean conservatism.

This delineation of our two conservative traditions emerges quite clearly from a comparison of Burkean doctrines with some of the main tenets of liberal thought as that thought has developed since Jefferson's time to the present. The liberal acceptance of reform and rejection of revolution, for example, is more in keeping with Burke than the endarkened conservative abhorrence of both reform and revolution. Similarly, liberal notions of aristocracy, property, and status are much closer to Burke than conservative notions; indeed, the prescriptive element in much liberal thought and policy is especially suggestive of Burkean philosophy.

The search for Burkean themes in American liberalism may usefully begin with the first of the great liberal presidents, Thomas Jefferson, and in no better area than the French Revolution. There is a widespread belief, of course, that Jefferson was in general a "friend of revolution," and in particular a partisan of the French uprising of 1789. Certainly Jefferson was critical of Burke's famous *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that Jefferson shared a number of Burke's sentiments on the subject. Cautioning moderation on his French friends and admirers, Jefferson outlined a plan of government in 1789 that Burke probably would not have rejected. Louis XVI, he wrote in his *Autobiography*, "had he been left to himself," would have accepted

> a wise constitution . . . hereditary in his line, himself placed at its head, with powers so large as to enable him to do all the good of his station, and so limited, as to restrain him from its abuse. This he would have faithfully administered, and more than this, I do believe, he never wished.

For reasons which are not clear, Jefferson was quite convinced that Louis XVI in 1789 was prepared to make concessions to democracy that no other ruling house in Europe would have considered making at that time. Thus, according to Jefferson, the King was prepared to grant:

1. Freedom of the person by habeas corpus;
2. Freedom of conscience;
3. Freedom of the press;
4. Trial by jury;
5. A representative legislature;
6. Annual meetings;
7. The origination of laws;
8. The exclusive right of taxation and appropriation;
9. The responsibility of Ministers.

Jefferson had advised his French friends, he reported in his *Autobiography*, that "with the exercise of these powers they could obtain, in future, whatever might be further necessary to improve and preserve their constitution." But, he added sadly, "They thought otherwise . . . and events have proved their lamentable error."

It is also of interest that Jefferson, like Burke, tended to underestimate the social forces and pressures in France that gave rise to the Revolution. Where Burke had attributed the Revolution to the intemperance of the mob, Jefferson traced it to the "inordinate gambling and dissipations" of Marie Antoinette and her clique, which "had been a sensible item in the exhaustion of the treasury . . . [calling] into action the reforming hand of the nation." In 1821, more than thirty years after the Revolution, Jefferson still insisted

> that had there been no Queen, there would have been no revolution. No force would have been provoked, nor exercised. The King would have gone hand in hand with the wisdom of his sounder counsellors, who, guided by the increased lights of the age, wished only, with the same pace, to advance the principles of their social constitution.

Finally, it is worth noting that Jefferson did not approve of the execution of Louis and his consort; the sometime advocate of fertilizing liberty trees with tyrants' blood would have "shut up the Queen in a convent," and retained the King but with limited powers.

When, seventy-five years after Jefferson wrote his *Autobiography*, Woodrow Wilson expressed his views on the French Revolution he

explicitly agreed with Burke's interpretation of that event as set forth in the *Reflections on the French Revolution.* Of all the liberal presidents, Wilson was the most directly influenced by Burke, and in no other area of his thought is the influence as evident and forceful as it appears in Wilson's treatment of social change. The apostle of the New Freedom was something of a neophobe with regard to sweeping social innovation, and he was at one with Burke in observing that "political growth refuses to be forced." Using the French Revolution as his text, he observed of Burke, in an essay published in 1896, that

> He was not defending France, if you look to the bottom of it; he was defending England:—and the things he hated are truly hateful. He hated the French revolutionary philosophy and deemed it unfit for free men. And that philosophy is in fact radically evil and corrupting. No state can ever be conducted on its principles.

The major deficiency of the French philosophy, Wilson continued, is its holding that government is a matter of contract and deliberate arrangement, "whereas in fact it is an institute of habit, bound together by innumerable threads of association, scarcely one of which has been deliberately placed." The true object of government, Wilson wrote, is not liberty but justice, not majority advantage but equity in adjusting the interests of all classes. Nor can government be changed at will; "governments have never been successfully and permanently changed except by slow modification operating from generation to generation." Thus, for Wilson as for Burke, the origins of government and related concepts such as liberty were to be found in the nature of society; and Wilson's society was compounded "of the common habit, an evolution of experience, an interlaced growth of tenacious relationships, a compact, living, organic whole, structural, not mechanical."

Wilson's distrust of popular government, radicalism, and Bolshevism is, of course, well-known, and it is quite clear that he conceived the New Freedom as a moderate and necessary response to the clamor for social change which, elsewhere in the world, was becoming the cry of revolution. History, after all, provided abundant evidence that freedom denied was license provoked, and many of the reforms of his administration can be understood as concessions to the inevitable, not admissions of the desirable. Believing with Burke that political growth cannot be forced, Wilson's conception of change

never went beyond a grudging and partial acceptance of the social and economic realities of his day.

The conservative liberalism of the two Roosevelts is also consistent with the Burkean tradition. Both Roosevelts were politically atune to popular insurgent sentiments, and each did battle against the doctrines of judicial capitalism, Wall Street, and monopoly power. But the first Roosevelt was essentially a social Darwinist, and at heart he remained suspicious of attempts to interfere with the fundamental and harsh laws of natural selection as they were manifested in society. From this point of view the principles of Eugene Debs and William Jennings Bryan could be regarded as anarchistic and Jacobinistic, as dangerous as, or even more dangerous than the dogmas of concentrated wealth. The entire political career of Theodore Roosevelt can be interpreted, in fact, as an attempt to outflank the radical position by stealing the thunder although not the lightning of the leaders of agrarian and labor protest.

Similarly, Franklin D. Roosevelt saw himself as a preserver rather than a reformer, and in the years before he reached the White House he was particularly critical of homespun or foreign remedies for the treatment of social evils. The troubled state of the world, he observed in 1919, is the state of "trying to get something for nothing, of trying to rush law and order off its feet, of seeking to put into effect new doctrines without consultation, without thought, without consideration of the whole mass of the people. Every one of us would like to see a state of perfection on earth, . . ." he went on, "but we know too that every great reform takes time and good judgment, and that too great haste often defeats its own ends." Like Wilson and the first Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt espoused social change not as a means to utopian ends but as a necessary attribute of social growth and political cohesion. The alternative, he declared in 1920, to putting "our own house in order . . . [to making] our government as efficient as we would conduct our own private individual businesses . . . will simply mean the spread of doctrines which seek to effect change by unconstitutional means." It is not likely that Burke would have disagreed with these "Reflections on the Russian Revolution."

The resemblance between Burkean philosophy and the American liberal tradition does not end, however, with consideration of the liberal view of revolution and reform. For the two traditions are

compatible in at least three other philosophical areas which have to do with the roles of aristocracy, property, and status in society. Although the Burkean emphasis on aristocratic leadership may seem, at first glance, to be in conflict with the principles of liberal democracy, such emphasis has been articulated and, indeed, exemplified by the liberal leadership. Jefferson, for example, believing that there was a "natural aristocracy among men," thought democratic leadership should be entrusted to men of virtue and talent, with or without wealth. The "artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents," he rejected, not because it was founded on wealth but because it was without either virtue or talents, "for with these it would belong to the [natural aristocracy]." The extent to which virtue and talents were, in Jefferson's time, the concomitants of a leisure and education made possible by wealth Jefferson did not investigate, but it is worth noting that Jefferson, elsewhere, explicitly reserved to men of property or "satisfactory situations" an important role in government. Such men are "interested in the support of law and order," he wrote John Adams in 1815, and they "may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private."

Jefferson clearly thought of himself as a member of the "natural aristocracy," but it is worth noting that he was possessed of considerable property in land and slaves during most of his life, and, indeed, a considerable number of the liberal presidents have combined the "natural" and "artificial" advantages of wealth, birth, talents, and—most would agree—virtue, in their persons. The dual aristocracy certainly includes, in addition to Jefferson, Wilson and the two Roosevelts, and it would not be exaggerating too much to add Jackson, although not Lincoln or Truman. Stevenson, had he been elected in 1952, or 1956, would not have done violence to the aristocratic leadership pattern of the liberal tradition.

Also reminiscent of Burkean philosophy is the role of property in liberal thought. Burke, it will be recalled, defended private property, and especially landed property, but he never believed that economic factors were the sole or most important factors governing human behavior. Similarly, the liberal tradition has given property ownership a central but not a deterministic position in its philosophy.

Unlike the Marxists on the left or the endarkened conservatives on the right, the liberals have never maintained that the social order is a mere reflection of property-owning relationships. Property ownership *per se*, however, has always been held to be important, and the liberal conception of the good society is that of a property-owning democracy wherein the government functions not to minimize property but to maximize the opportunity to acquire it. In the liberal view, the good citizen is not necessarily a property-owner, but on the other hand, it has been consistently maintained from Jefferson to the present that the man who owns some property, whether of the income-producing or personal variety, is likely to be a good American.

Thus, there is no record that private property, "free enterprise," or "business" *as such* has ever been attacked by the foremost liberal spokesmen. Indeed, the occasional extreme statements on these subjects have leaned not toward radicalism but toward its opposite, as is illustrated by Wilson's observation in 1912 that, "If America is not to have free enterprise, then she can have freedom of no sort whatever." But in the main the liberal tradition has stressed a generalized property ownership rather than "free enterprise" as the basis of a free society.

Within this view of the relations between property and freedom there are elements of physiocracy, and the development of liberal economic policies has always had strong overtones of prescription. The Jeffersonian democrats most valued property in land, and the independent farmers were thought to be the most desirable class of citizens. Later in the development of the liberal tradition the goals of public policy were to include the welfare of small entrepreneurs in business and the ordinary worker in industry, but in the early period industrialism was freely equated with corruption, vice, and class strife. Although Jefferson himself came to accept the inevitability of industry and city life, toward the end of his life he manifested an increased nostalgia for the past as well as a marked pessimism with regard to the future.

The nostalgia for the past, in fact, is one of Jefferson's foremost bequests to the liberal tradition, and in keeping with it the principal quest of liberal politics has been the preservation of something akin to the social order of Jeffersonian America. It can hardly be questioned that among the beneficiaries of the various New Deals, Fair Deals, and Square Deals the farmers must be accorded primacy of place, as the possessors of a prescriptive virtue. The treatment of the small

businessman also proceeds from the notion that small-scale property ownership functions as the seedbed of democracy, and in recent years the notion has been extended to include support for measures promoting home ownership and other kinds of personal property acquisition. Clearly government maintenance of small agriculture and business can be understood only in terms of a tradition, for it is long since true that, from an economic point of view, the family-size farm is obsolete, and the small businessman has ceased to play an important role. Perhaps equally archaic is the related notion that big business is bad business, and that it can be kept, somehow, small by regulation; in any case, within such a notion lurks the ancient suspicion of large-scale industrialism.

Thus, as Burke tried to insulate the England of his day against the spread of revolutionary doctrine, the American liberal tradition has sought to preserve the image of an eighteenth-century America from the onslaught of industrial collectivism and collectivistic ideology. On the one hand, the liberal imagination, to borrow Lionel Trilling's phrase, has tended to consider but little the political and economic imperatives of an industrial society; on the other hand, it has taken its conception of harmony and stability from the social order of a bygone age. It is not too much to say that the liberal utopia is not and never has been even remotely similar to the Brave New World of 1984, but rather, in the words of R. H. Tawney, has been that past

> excellent social order . . . in which the mass of people were the masters of the holdings which they plowed and of the tools with which they worked, and could boast . . . "it is a quietness to a man's mind to live upon his own and to know his heir certain."

It has been of relatively little concern whether the ancient social order was, in fact, excellent; it is the conventional image, or illusion, of that order that has contained the liberal tradition.

It is the nostalgia for the past, moreover, and the Burkean element in general, that distinguishes American liberalism from certain varieties of European liberalism. Somewhat unfriendly to utilitarian or Benthamite principles in its early history, American liberalism did not, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, join the company of British and continental liberalism in a transition to socialism. As a consequence, the American liberal in England today would be most comfortably seated not on the opposition side of the House of Com-

mons but in close proximity to R. A. Butler on the Conservative front bench; and if he were to cross the Channel he would find congenial company largely in circles to the right of Mendès-France.

The American liberal tradition, in short, is a "left" tradition much less by reference to its principles than by reference to its position vis-a-vis endarkened conservatism. Where endarkened conservatism has tended to seek the greatest good for the smallest number, American liberalism has sought some good for the greatest number. In contrast to the conservative tradition, which in the words of Robert G. McCloskey has largely consisted of "an attempt to define good and right as that which the economic man does to achieve success," the liberal tradition has been at one with Burke in insisting that man is first and foremost a moral man with rights, duties, and responsibilities that are not wholly confined to economic affairs. And where economics is concerned American liberalism has echoed Burke in maintaining that all men

> have a right to the fruits of their industry, and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents; to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring; to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights; but not to equal things.

The Burkean conservatives, in short, do not have to be looked for outside of politics. Indeed, to suggest that Burkean philosophy has not been politically articulate in the past is to miss its formidable analytical power and catholicity of thought that, everywhere, has had great political influence. To be sure, if the heirs of Burke are sought only among the avowed conservatives in American politics they will not be found, for American conservatives have not been philosophers or politicians of Burkean extraction. American liberals, of course, would deny *their* connection with Burke, and it must be affirmed that liberalism, for the most part, is not conscious of its debt to Burke. Nevertheless, if Burkean philosophy is compared with the American liberal tradition, the conclusion must follow that Burke's principal following in America can be found among the leaders and doctrines that have been espoused by the liberal movement.

Books - - - -

JOYCE CARY AND THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL MORALITY

By ELIZABETH R. BETTMAN

Joyce Cary's last novels, *Prisoner of Grace*, *Except the Lord*, and *Not Honour More*, represent a marked shift away from the affirmative emphasis characteristic of his earlier writing. Furthermore, while this second trilogy is as accomplished and whole a piece of fiction as anything we can point to today, it has not presented the challenge to critical readers that might have been expected of so ambitious a work.

Into these last three novels, Cary has poured a lifetime's reflection, ideas and observations concerning the workings of the creative imagination in politics. His motivation in this trilogy is to write of "the whole political world, not only as commonly restricted to parliaments and congresses, but as it works in marriage and the nursery, in all human relations."

With very few exceptions the critics have indicated little or no understanding of the direction of Cary's thought, their mistake being the usual one of attributing to Cary the opinions expressed by his characters. Cary has tried to rectify this misunderstanding with frequent explanations of his intentions. The situation in which he placed his characters were calculated to illustrate a "real world, not one run . . . on slogans," as he says.

To present his "real world," therefore, Cary wove into the fabric of his novels the verbal chicanery of politics. Nina's narrative, for example, reads like a tissue of the half-truths and slogans politicians use to disguise their behavior. To give the feel of a man like Nimmo, to whom the lingo of politics was as natural as the air he breathed, Cary had to incorporate into the fabric of his narrative the jingoism of political speech. Exposed since childhood to the power of the spoken word, Nimmo was raised in an atmosphere of religious evangelicism and working class agitation—where the emotional impact of language was a potent force. Consequently his mastery of language became an offense and a shield in his long struggle to power. Paralleling the rise of the Liberal party and the growth of the trade-union movement, his career coincided with a period which comes as close to class

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warfare as any in British history, and in this period, under Cary's hand, Nimmo the spellbinder springs to life in all the complexity of his dual nature—the rabble-rousing agitator and the revivalist preacher. Nimmo's extreme Protestant and dissenting creed opposed him naturally enough to privilege, so that politics was the inevitable career for a man bent on realizing goals of social reform.

In the first book of the trilogy, Nimmo appears through the refracted vision of Nina, and in the last book through the vision of Jim Latter. The middle book of the series is a memoir written in the first person by Nimmo. It is an interim of recapitulation and introspection, like the quiet of an andante movement before a violent finale.

In structure, the trilogy is closely woven, each novel leading naturally to the next and containing all of the former. The books could be compared to chapters in a complete story, although each book stands firmly on its own feet. *Not Honour More*, the grim climax to the series, is the least satisfactory taken by itself. The tone of the trilogy shifts. Beginning in a vein of comedy, it ends on a note of terror, in a manner usual with Cary, owing to his refusal to compartmentalize life into fixed categories of tragedy and comedy.

Nina's book, setting the stage for Nimmo, the demagogue and the artist in words, is a reiteration of Cary's theme that "art has a lot to answer for." Or as Cary has also phrased the idea, echoing Shelley, poets have "started all the revolutions." Nimmo thus begins his long affair with power, during the South African War, with a pro-Boer position, the first of a long series of expedient choices, indicating his uncanny ability to select the right things on which to vent his radical indignation. His enemies charge him with being able to spellbind himself, but the "real truth" as Nina sees it "is that Chester's imagination suggested to him every day hundreds of truths" and it was always easy for him to find among them one that "suited him." A silent censor, in active conspiracy against Nimmo, Nina's mind accumulates damning evidence. An incident concerning the Boer War is typical of Nina's observation of Nimmo. "He pretends to love peace and truth, and there he is working himself up (or letting his own nerves work him up) to cause as much trouble and tell as many lies as possible."

The class barrier which she feels acutely but cannot admit, and against which Nimmo rages fruitlessly, causes her to view with a cold eye his frequent breaches of taste. Repelled by Nimmo's treachery to the benefactors of his youth, she cannot abide his conviction of a class plot against him. He turns against the local county council, all friends and relatives of Nina, and for reasons of political advantage, accuses them of working to "keep the poor poor." Lord Slapton, the local landlord who befriended his

brother, is called a "baby starver," and what maddens Nina is how Nimmo manages to convince himself that such is the truth.

A spiteful voice inside her tells Nina that her husband is simply a clever and cunning agitator "who would do anything for success and power." Her life becomes a nightmare, "a world without any solid objects at all." She has the sensation of floating "day and night through clouds of words and schemes and hopes and ambitions and calculations where you could not say this idea was obviously selfish and dangerous and that one quite false and wicked because all of them were relative to something else."

A pacifist in 1914, Nimmo changes sides at the outbreak of war to become the leader of the militant section of the government. For Nina this represents a clear case of "ratting" on his pledges, although Nimmo justifies his shift on the basis that he is acting in the national interest. Regarding himself as divinely inspired, he becomes "renewed in spirit," a confidence of inspiration which makes Nina accuse him of "using" his religion. And as Cary quite properly intended, the reader's problem of how and when a statesman is entitled to break promises remains unresolved.

But Nimmo's unshaken belief in his own state of grace is of the first importance to his success, as Nina realizes. "He needed to be sincere, for if he had any doubts he could not put himself over with effect. Sincerity (as he knew) was the secret of his power as a speaker; all those sudden 'virtuoso' changes of voice and similes and inspired gestures were the direct result (as, I suppose, in most great preachers and saints) of a 'burning' conviction." Preaching his cherished principles of liberty, redundant peace, equal opportunity and the abolition of poverty, Nimmo argued his own cause with equal effectiveness. "Freedom" as Nina put it, "was Chester's word." It meant for him, "Let God provide—don't get in His way." Vague high thinking commingled with strong political ambition was certainly capable of the most incongruous results in Nimmo's career.

By Nina's account, Nimmo was a politician in marriage as well as in public life. Sensing her anger and dislike, he converts her guilt to punishment, and uses his religion to torture her. Trapped by the obligation of his love, which he imposes upon her in every marital crisis, she feels defenseless against him. She cannot resist "the confidence trick . . . with a little bit of trust in God added," with which he digs into her soul.

In spite of problems of personal integrity peculiar to her, Nina exposes Nimmo's self-deception with great perception, how "the lie in the soul" against which he inveighs is his own most flagrant transgression. But Nina defends her husband against the charge of political hypocrisy on the basis that Nimmo is immersed in the political life. "Politics, after all, is a kind of war . . . and no one thinks the worse of soldiers for inventing stratagems

to save their own lives or to kill the enemy." Cary's view of the matter is that "history is made up of names at which the moralist holds his nose," Nimmo being no different in kind from Roosevelt, Lloyd George, or Bevan. But it is not given to Nina to understand the true nature of Nimmo's transgression against society. To the discerning reader, Cary reserves the right to charge Nimmo with a corruption peculiar to democracy, "the misuse of the word."

In the conflict with Nina, Nimmo's personality is delineated; in the conflict with Latter, Cary means that we read opposing ideas of government. Cary and Latter are at opposite ends of the political spectrum; their differences of background, education and temperament serve to reinforce the clash of conviction. Nimmo trusts in human goodness and a government of men under law. Latter, for whom evil is rampant, believes only in force as a necessary corrective. Latter regards all politicians as "cheats," "poodle-fakers" and "racketeers." He is a complete dogmatist, incapable of understanding the world of half-truths, impurities and complexities in which the politician is forced to have his being, because of the way he finds the world. Latter repudiates fascism, "but he has a fascist mind; he has been a soldier and he asks why a country can't be run like a good regiment, by men who believe in duty and discipline" who do not grab all for themselves and who would not stoop to rottenness and corruption. Without being a cruel man, Latter is an exceedingly angry man, baffled by what he conceives to be the "abuses" and "chromium-plated confidence tricks" dignified by the name of democracy. To Latter the principle of rule by persuasion is abhorrent; he cannot even conceive of democratic statesmen exercising leadership of public opinion by the art of persuasion. Democracy breeds only bungling, injustice and crookedness.

Thus Cary pits his Liberal politician against an authoritarian, to "show in these three novels this real world of danger and conflict, and how men act in politics." Superimposed over the level of Nimmo's oratory and Latter's ranting, Nina's comment provides an interesting kind of shadow play, lending depth and finish to the characterization of the two men. Because the problem of sincerity lies at the heart of the trilogy, as Granville Hicks has stated, Nina is a character of moral significance in her own right. I think she is supposed to represent a person whose failure of the will is an absence of moral commitment, a case mayhap of "la femme immanente" in Simone de Beauvoir's sense of the term. Her tacit consent to being "acted upon" is another version of Nimmo's problem. Like Nimmo she can justify her behavior in terms of the exigencies of the moment, what Trilling calls the affliction of the human personality by "reality." Nina by her own admission is capable of adjusting to anything, a quality which lends credibility

to her evidence, in the sense that she has no fixed point of view. Nina's "brackety" mind, as Cary describes it, expresses itself naturally in qualifications and parentheses. She is a master of the double-entendre. This power of oblique statement is an adroit circumvention of the dangers of explicitness, as well as a remarkable distillation of those complexities of politics which defy logical analysis. Nina's comment that "I really think that politicians (I mean the good honest ones who have good principles) can be more admirable than saints because they do far more difficult work and are not allowed just to 'save their souls' " is Cary's artful way of directing the focus where he wants it—on the problem of honest politicians and good principles, while avoiding the awkwardness of direct comment. Nina makes the problem of Nimmo's conscience abundantly clear, its incapacity to force him to inexpedient action. This weakness is dramatically magnified in *Not Honour More*, by a combination of Latter's prejudiced outlook and Nimmo's realistic and progressive deterioration. Self-deception—that most insidious and complete corrosive of personality—gains complete mastery over Nimmo at the end of his life. His gradual moral disintegration is traced with finesse from a point in *A Prisoner of Grace*, where Nina describes how the gulf has widened between Nimmo and his closest associates. "He had, so to speak, in thirty years of war, made such devastation around himself that to talk to him at all was like calling across a waste full of broken walls and rusty wire and swamps of poisoned water; full of dead bodies."

In due course, Nina leaves to marry Jim, Tom Nimmo dies by suicide, Sally becomes a slave to their father's ambition, while old friends fall away. This is the state of things when *A Prisoner of Grace* ends. Nina had understood her "nervous, passionate, fanciful husband" astutely and ably, up to a point. But because she cannot go beyond that point owing to her limitations as an observer, her ignorance of the forces which made Nimmo (his poverty and his religious background), Cary fills in the portrait with *Except the Lord*, a book which compels us to try to reinterpret Nina's story.

Except the Lord is Nimmo's apology for his life. Its lowered key strikes a deceptively redemptive note, and Nimmo's representation of his childhood is a grave and beautiful study of the religious nature of man. The piety and saintliness of Nimmo's father, reinforced by poverty and adversity, strikes an implied contrast with Nimmo's wordly selfishness. The stubborn steadfastness of the saint, the upright fearlessness of the man who walks with God, is set by implication against Nimmo's too facile accommodation to the exigencies of reality. The boy who learned from his father that "One does not fear God because he is terrible, but because he is literally the soul of goodness and truth, because to do him wrong is to do wrong to some mysterious part of oneself," develops into a man whose prayers for deliver-

ance from "the lie in the soul" have a distinctly hollow ring. Later, overtaken by the struggle for power, he forsakes his religion entirely. *Except the Lord* is an account of Nimmo's reconversion, the occasion prompted by failing health and the fear of death. Describing a period in his youth when he had turned from religion to Marxism, he says, "The heart that takes to itself a shell can die within its shell, for the heart must breathe, and its breath, its very life, is the give and take of human sympathy." This high-flown sentiment is impressive as far as it goes. What Nimmo means to say, of course, is that he turned away from the material dialecticism of theoretical communism from conviction that "Except the Lord build the house, their labor is but vain that build it." What Nimmo does not see is how his pious utterances apply to himself, so that, in effect, he is pronouncing his own sentence. The renewed access of faith, at his sister's grave, is short-lived. The vision of "the life of the soul," without which all achievement is "a madhouse, self-hatred, corruption and despair," fades before the vision of Nimmo the great public benefactor recalled to the service of his country. The temptation to power is too strong. Surely, he thinks, all is not vanity if the stakes are but high enough.

Not Honour More, the story of Nimmo's last weeks and months in politics, is a sordid record of intrigue, broken promises and honor jeopardized. It ends in a death of ignominy unparalleled in Cary's work. But the shortcomings of Nimmo are not in any way intended to reflect credit on Jim Latter. He is a culpable man also. His ferocious sincerity without imagination is far removed from virtue. It only marks him as a dangerous man. His limitations are such that he is impervious to any point of view but his own. His cliché-bound outlook colors his thinking so completely that in a complex situation his judgment is wholly untrustworthy. Always the inspired impersonator, Cary catches Latter's incoherent indignation admirably in a staccato telegraphic style perfectly suited to Latter's desperate shut-in feeling. The illusion that not Cary, but Latter wrote this book, and that these are the opinions that a man like Latter would be bound to hold, is so strong that it is impossible to believe that anyone could have attributed Latter's views to Cary. In admiration, Hilary Corke said, "Latter is as tough a nut as Cary has ever given himself to crack."

As the world sickens him, Latter veers, out of fanatic honesty, to lonely dedicated action. "It wasn't a murder I did," he insists, "It was an execution. . . . I did it because I myself had to do it. There was no other choice for a man who wasn't prepared to live like a rat."

Not Honour More begins with Jim's discovery of Nina's infidelity, at which time he tries to kill Nimmo, but the general strike and Nimmo's recall to public office intervenes, thus averting a showdown until Jim un-

covers a treachery more dastardly than sexual infidelity. He discovers his wife in league with Nimmo to betray for political advantage a constable who had served under Jim during the strike. "You've sold Maufe to the mob," Jim tells Nimmo. "You've put yourself right with the gang of gimme-boys and commies, who mean by hook or crook, but chiefly crook, to smash this country first and then take it over." Nimmo's unfeeling reaction to this accusation makes Latter resolve to kill first Nimmo and then Nina—"because of the rottenness. Because of the corruption. Because all loyalty was a laugh and there was no more trust. . . . Because of the grabbers and tapeworms who were sucking the soul out of England."

Cary's meaning for the judgment is as strong as he could make it, the trilogy being dedicated to the proposition, by the obverse analogy of Nimmo's corrupt imagination as it were, that dishonesty in any form corrupts, and that a double standard of morality in politics can never serve "as a valid motive or excuse in political action."[1]

In the broadcast on the political novel which Cary completed recently, he reaffirmed his belief in the fallacy of "raison d'état" as a workable principle in the government of men. Too often it has been used as an excuse for the greatest crimes, and the idea of a special morality for the politician is very damaging to men of public affairs. "Lies are always lies, evil is always evil, public and private morality are governed by precisely the same law." Elsewhere Cary has stated that "integrity is our only criterion of value" in politics.

To the elusive nature of truth, no aspect of it ever having been uncovered with finality, and to the enigma of personality, Cary's reaction has been what Richard Hughes calls empathy or Charity, in the Pauline sense, which is not the same thing at all as "the business of making allowances." There is so very little that you can specifically say about people, Cary seems to insist, that the only thing is to show them in action so that the world can draw its own conclusion. But more than this is Cary's gift of understanding, his "sense of the mystery and vitality of every human being." The truth about people is far from neat or homogeneous. People and their relationships and motivations spread and divide, often contradicting each other, as the case of Nina's inscrutable behavior would imply. Often life moves too fast to be examined; we only catch a glimpse of the mysteries within mysteries underlying our individual and collective experience. As fully revealed as characters in fiction can be, Cary's characters have the added power of suggesting how much remains to be told.

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[1]Personal letter from Joyce Cary to Elisabeth R. Bettman, December 3, 1956.

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